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AGAZINE

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by KAREN COOKSON

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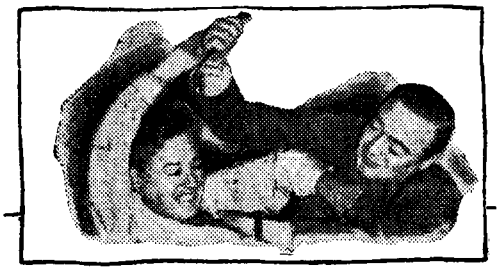

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The Best in Romantic Fiction

NEW LOVE MAGAZINE

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ALL STORIES NEW

PEGGY GRAVES
Editor

VOL. 27 JUNE, 1950 NO. 3

Complete Novel

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Shelly was the beautiful, talked-about stranger whose only crime was falling in love.

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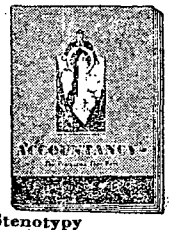

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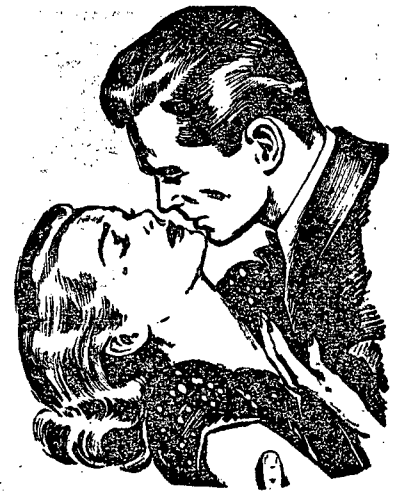

Dear Reader:

You just can't help liking Margo, even though the finger of suspicion points at her unwaveringly as queen of an evil force known as the "hot gold racket."

Randy couldn't help liking Margo, either—in fact, he couldn't even help loving her. That's why he got into hotter water than he'd ever felt in his life—and that was plenty hot.

You see, Randy's business was danger, so living at gun-point was nothing new to him. He was the hottest reporter that ever pounded a typewriter key, so of course he was the likely person to be sent out on the toughest assignment of the year: Randy's job was to get the inside dope on a racket that dealt in selling United States gold overseas at black market prices. That meant that the ring handling this "hot gold" netted thousands and thousands of dollars' profit in illegal transactions.

When Randy found proof that Margo was mixed up in this sinister racket his heart turned over and died. Margo just didn't seem the type to do anything wrong—she was a sweet-and-lovely kid trying to

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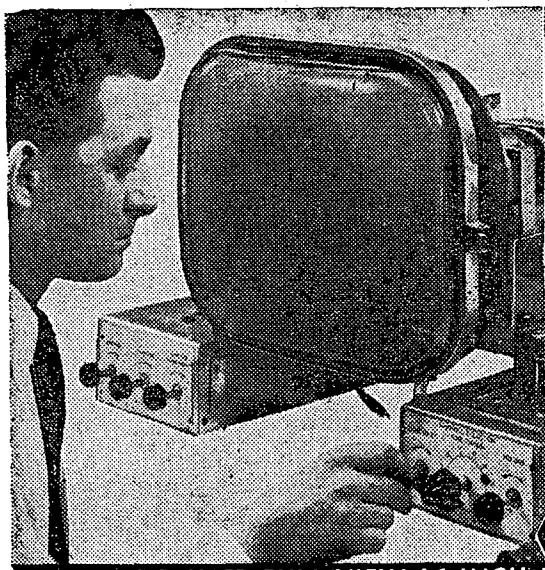

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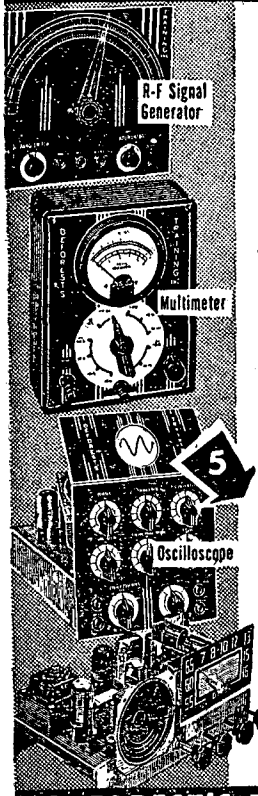

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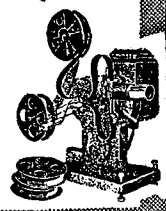

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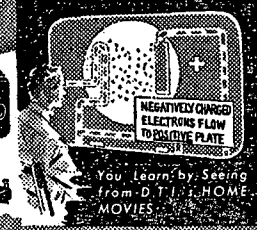

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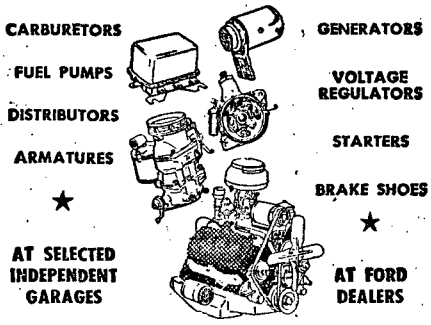

FORD Division of FORD MOTOR COMPANY

(Continued from page 6)

make her way as a night club singer. But when Randy met her friends he knew that no girl, no matter how angelic, could be mixed up with such a crew without having a finger in the pie. The guy that Randy hated, though—really hated, was Jim Evans, a big smoothie who just happened to be Margo's fiancé. Randy didn't know how he could have fallen for a girl who could love such a low character—or, for that matter, a girl who had the conscience to play so despicable a game. But love doesn't stop to think, and even when it does, it's powerless to combat something that is so strongly directed by the heart. Randy played along in his new role as one of the stooges, sticking close to Margo and Jim, just biding the time when he could smash his fist in the other man's evil face. But he had to find out who the leader of the treacherous ring was—to discover the real identity of the man known as "The Spider." When his heart wasn't listening, though, Randy told himself that women are pretty clever—even the sweet-and-lovely type . . . and the Spider could possibly be a girl . . .

Don't miss MARGO, Francis Flick's full-length novel coming next month. So be sure to reserve a copy of July NEW LOVE for your summer reading enjoyment. There are 128 romance-packed pages of fiction by Nancy Crosby, Elizabeth Ring, and other favorites, as well as our special features. And there's an extra treat in store for one and all: we are pleased to announce the beginning of a dramatic new serial, MY HEART'S DOWN UNDER, by Maysie Greig, whose exciting romantic novels are sold the world over.

July NEW LOVE is out June 2nd. Until then,

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Peggy Gaddis

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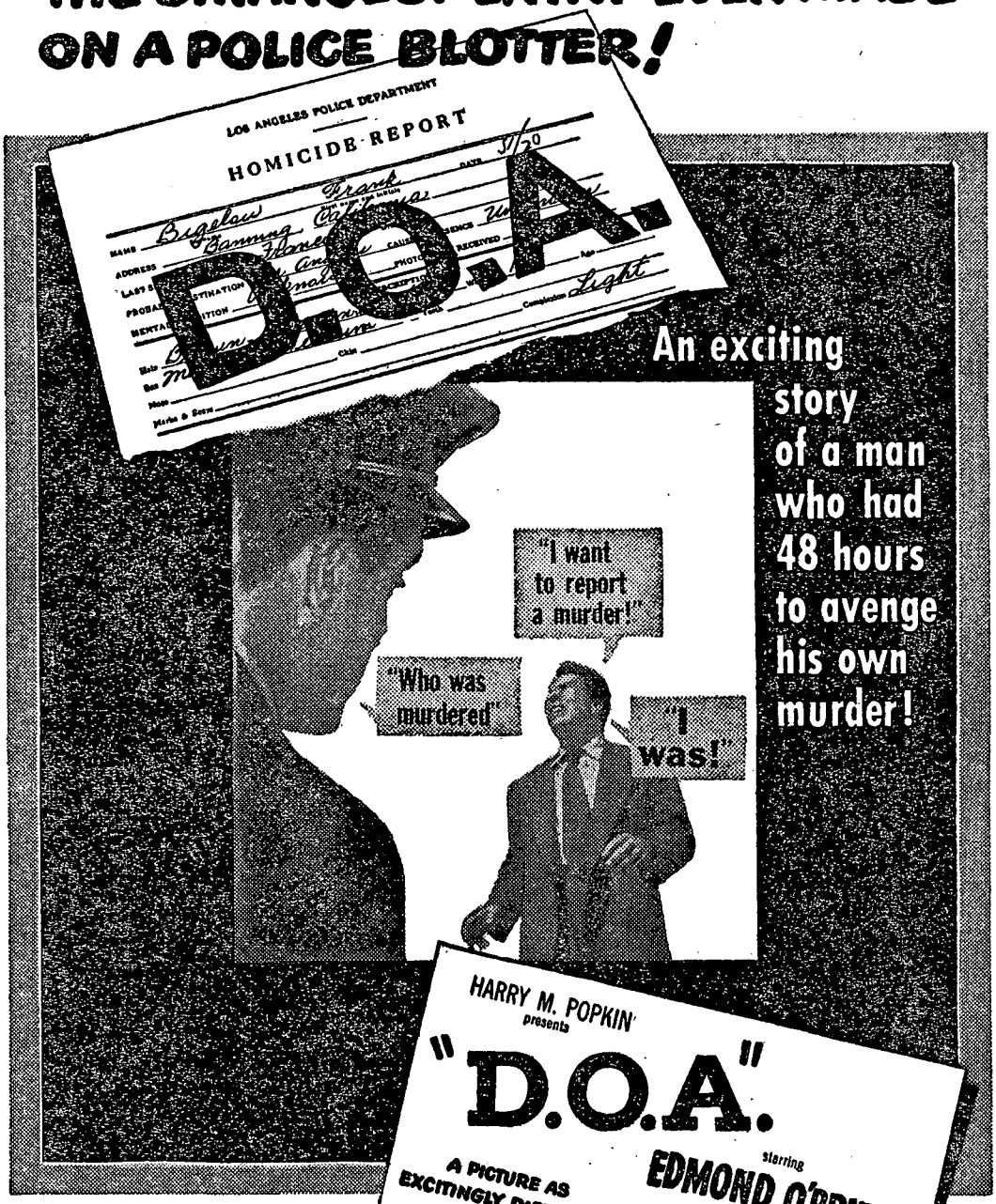
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PIN-UP Beauty Secrets

By LYNNE SVEC

HOW'S YOUR S. A. rating? In Hollywoodese, the letters stand for sex appeal—but in a more general sense, the translation Scents Appeal leads by a nose!

However, a gal's Sense Appeal is almost indefinably linked with her Sex Appeal—the art of perfumery is that much of a woman's charm. It takes a woman with charm to realize what fragrance does for her audience; how it intrigues those she meets; enchants those she loves; makes people realize, in a subtle way, when she's coming and going. And on the more selfish side, a dazzling damsel knows what fragrance does for herself, how it soothes tired nerves, chases dull care, relaxes the mind and fluffs up her feminine ego.

Did you know that the word perfume (par fume) means "through smoke?" This meaning comes from primitive times when the only perfume the cave men knew was the lovely aroma released by burning certain woods and gums. It took the Romans to refine and enlarge its use to such an extent that exotic Roman beauties even had different perfumes for different parts of their bodies! Some went so far as to order special perfumes blended for each room in the house.

While you may not have the time or inclination to develop your taste for the subtleties of perfume to such an extent, you should realize that perfume can definitely add to your joy of living. If properly used, it can excite the imagination and pleasure of those around you.

What perfume is the one for you? There's no hard and fast rule about what kind of perfume to use. It's fun to experiment with tiny vials until you find the one that gives you the most pleasure. You might like to use one of several perfumes, according to your mood or the occasion.

When you wear sports clothes, you might like a scent distilled from clover, heather or lilac, to suggest a fresh, natural mood. For the afternoon, gardenia or carnation will create an aura of sophistication. Intoxicating and alluring bouquets will likely be your choice for "big moments." In essence, then, perfume comes in three different kinds of scent: (1) Flowery, for a sweet, very feminine personality; (2) Spicy, for a vivacious, piquant type; and (3) Exotic, for a sophisticated cosmopolitan. It's up to you whether you want to adhere to type—or do a personality switch based on scents.

Too, since you become so accustomed to an often-used scent that you can no longer smell it, you can safeguard against using too much by changing your scent from time to time. If you are a "one-scent girl," in your soap, bath salts, toilet water, cologne and perfume, as well as your sachets, guard especially against over-use.

(Continued on page 124)

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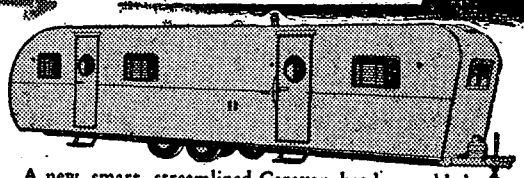

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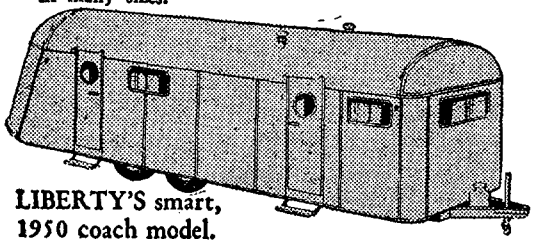

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By
KAREN
COOKSON

Beautiful STRANGER

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Shelly was the beautiful stranger who caused heads to turn and tongues to wag . . . it was an odd way to greet a girl whose only crime was falling in love.

CHAPTER ONE

Dream Girl

SHELLY ST. CLAIRE studied herself in the mirror over the hospital bureau. The bandages had been removed only yesterday, and her new nose was still a novelty. Louis Harrison's skillful hands had transformed her into a real beauty. Before the operation she had been a pretty girl, but her looks had lacked glamor and excitement. Now she had a charming air of patrician disdain—as if she had been born rich. A stranger might

Shelly was fascinated by the girl in red, who could have been her twin.

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have described her as sure of herself, hard-to-get . . . and very desirable.

Her black hair was just the same; so was her gentle up-curving mouth. But she was different. It's magic, she thought. A kind of black magic, perhaps. Perhaps that was the price tag attached to becoming someone nature never intended you to be.

But that was such utter nonsense. Louis, the man she loved, was an ethical plastic surgeon—not a charlatan. He was famous in his line, and greatly respected.

She slipped into the new brown and yellow tweed suit she was going to wear on the train to Bransford, the town where Louis had his practice.

Even though they were engaged to be married, it still seemed incredible that handsome Dr. Louis Harrison, one of the country's foremost plastic surgeons, had ever noticed her at all.

A month ago, Shelly had been just one of many young nurses at Hartville City Hospital. A Hartville deb had smashed up her sleek convertible, and her pretty face had been cut to ribbons by windshield glass. The deb's rich father had frantically asked for the help of Dr. Harrison in restoring the girl's good looks.

All the romance-hungry nurses at the hospital had been keyed up over the arrival of Dr. Harrison because he was young, successful, handsome—and unmarried. But it was Shelly who had caught his attention.

She had made no effort to put herself in his way. She had not supposed that Dr. Louis Harrison would be interested in any nurse at City Hospital. Smart young doctors like Dr. Harrison could marry for social position and money—with an eye to a Park Avenue practice.

BUT HE HAD stopped her in the corridor one day and asked her name. Shelly's heart still jumped crazily when she remembered the way his sharp gray eyes had taken her in, not missing a detail of her young face and form. Purposefully, he asked her to have dinner with him that evening. Doctors and nurses weren't supposed to date; it was an unwritten law at the hospital. But Dr. Louis Harrison was an arrogant man, a law unto himself.

He had called for her up at the nurses' home, scornful of hospital gossip, and had taken her to dinner at the best restaurant in town.

Everything about their first evening together had been just right—from the corsage of pale-green orchids he had sent her to wear with her black silk dinner suit to his gentle, undemanding good-night kiss. They'd had champagne with their dinner and had danced a little.

In his suave, charming way, Louis had wanted to know all about her. He actually seemed pleased to find out that she was just a hard-working girl, strictly on her own, with no family outside of two married sisters who lived on the West Coast.

Shelly had known as early as their third date that she was madly in love with him. That night he told her all about Riveredge, the private sanitarium he had just started in Bransford, about a hundred miles away. And she had looked across the table into his gray eyes and thought: I love you! Oh, Louis, I am in love with you!

Louis had been holding a menu in one hand and a pencil in the other while he talked. He had been sketching idly, doodling, Shelly had thought . . . until he turned the menu around and showed his drawing to her.

"My dream girl," he had said, smiling.

Shelly stared at the lightly sketched head of a beautiful girl with large, grave eyes, cameo features and softly waved dark hair. The girl seemed to have a regal air even though she was very young. Pain twisted through Shelly as if Louis had thrust a scalpel into her.

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"Oh . . . she's lovely," she managed to say at last. "What's her name?"

Louis laughed. "She hasn't a name, my dear. This is a dream girl. This represents my ideal of feminine charm—like a composite photograph, you know."

Relief washed over Shelly, leaving her almost faint. "Louis, if you weren't a plastic surgeon, you could be an artist! You have talent!" she exclaimed.

"A plastic surgeon has to have a bit of an artist in him," Louis had laughed, "But, tell me, how do you like my dream girl, Shelly?"

"Oh, she's beautiful!"

"No more beautiful than you would be . . . if you had her nose. Don't you realize," he went on quietly, "that her hair is dark, and her face is oval-shaped like yours. The eyes are just like yours, and the mouth—"

"But the nose changes everything!" Shelly said, staring at the sketch again.

"Yes, the nose changes everything," Louis agreed. And then he had added, "Shelly, I'd like to change your nose. I'd like to make you over in the image of my dream girl. It would be a very simple operation to change the shape of your nose and turn you into a real beauty! And then you would be my real life dream girl, darling!"

Shelly's heart went into a tailspin at the look that flamed in his gray eyes. Her pulses were pounding. He had called her, darling! Did he mean that he was falling in love with her? Or did he mean that he could fall in love with her? She felt confused. And his suggestion was such a drastic, unconventional one! She hardly knew what to say.

"I'm afraid I couldn't afford an operation," she said. "After all, there isn't anything really wrong with my nose. It isn't too big, or crooked—"

"Of course, there's nothing too wrong with your nose, my sweet," he laughed. "But it just isn't the perfect nose for you. And I happen to be a perfectionist. I'd like to see you with a nose that would make you a perfect beauty. . . It wouldn't cost you anything, Shelly. I would perform the operation myself, and I would make all the arrangements for your hospitalization at a private sanitarium near here that belongs to a friend of mine."

"But I couldn't let you do all that for me!"

"Why not, darling?"

In the candlelight, Louis' eyes had had an excited, eager glow. "I'm falling in love with you. I want to marry you. After the operation I want to take you home to Bransford with me. You can work at Riveredge until we're married . . . Please, darling, say yes!"

Because she was so much in love with him, Shelly had agreed to Louis' fantastic proposal. And now, she was ready to take a train to Bransford, with Louis' diamond sparkling on her finger. She was a new girl, with a new look. And a wonderful new life stretched ahead of her.

She was to make the trip to Bransford alone because Louis had flown to Washington for a scheduled operation. But she was expected at Riveredge. Her job and her room would be waiting for her.

"I've told everybody to be nice to my fiancée," Louis had written, "And what a surprise you'll be, darling! They won't be expecting a perfect, stunning beauty!"

That was one reason why Louis had performed the operation at his friend's sanitarium instead of at his own—so that people in Bransford needn't know about it.

"It will be our little secret, Shelly," Louis had said, "And, of course, no one will ever be able to tell from looking at you that you have undergone plastic surgery."

Shelly was glad to walk out of Parkview and into her waiting taxi. She could feel excitement and curiosity rising within her as her train neared Bransford. She could hardly wait to see the town where

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her new life with Louis would begin!

CHAPTER TWO

Red-Headed Stranger

SHE WAS the first passenger off the train. As she walked through the station, she was aware that heads turned after her and interested eyes followed her. Well, she supposed she would have to get used to that—now that Louis had made her into a flesh and blood dream girl!

She couldn't resist a sly glance at herself in the mirror of a weighing machine. A twinkle came into her eyes, and she almost giggled.

And then, suddenly, a pair of strong hands gripped her just above her elbows, lifted her off her feet, and swung her around.

"Hi there, beautiful stranger!" a deep voice said. Shelly was horrified to find herself crushed for a moment in the warm, enthusiastic embrace of a big, wide-shouldered, auburn-haired young man with friendly topaz-colored eyes.

She kicked him, furiously. "Take your hands off me this minute!" she raged, with her blue eyes blazing up at him.

The man grinned down at her. "But baby—" he began. Then his grin vanished, and a puzzled look crept into his confident golden eyes. Slowly, his hands dropped away, and he stared down at her as if she were a ghost.

"Who are you?" he asked, and now the friendliness vanished from his eyes. "Just exactly who are you?"

Her blue eyes clashed with his topaz ones for a queer breathless moment, and the impact was as violent as a blow. Shelly realized she was trembling weakly, as if the breath had been knocked out of her. But she tilted her chin proudly, and held her dark head high.

Her voice shook with fury. "Just exactly what business of yours is it who I am? And what do you mean by grabbing me and speaking to me?"

She realized that he was watching her with a strangely wary, distrustful look. She decided he was the rudest man she had ever met!

Instead of answering her, he asked another question. "Why have you come to Bransford?"

Shelly said, icily, "This may be your idea of a novel way to make a pickup. But it won't work, mister. I don't know whether you're trying to pretend that we're old friends—or what your game is. But I never saw you before in my life, and I never want to see you again!"

Angrily, she straightened the yellow felt hat he had almost knocked off her head. Gripping her suitcase firmly she whirled and marched away from him.

BUT she was shaky and unnerved. The auburn-haired young giant had disturbed her in some way she didn't care to analyze. He was very good-looking, and he had a kind of magnetism. His hug had been like a warm, sweet, welcome home. It had been phony, of course—just some kind of a new approach. Or *had* it been just an attempted pickup? She wasn't sure. He'd seemed so angry, so disappointed. Perhaps he really had mistaken her for someone he knew . . . Anyway, some foolish, weak part of her heart wished that his warm, gay greeting had truly been for Shelly St. Claire.

Something made her turn her head, just as she was getting into a taxi, and she saw that the red-headed man had followed her out of the station. He was still watching her with thoughtful, suspicious dark-gold eyes. Why, he was acting like a detective!

Indignation flared in her again. Oh, she hated him! And yet, in some queer way, he stirred her, excited her senses. She had been in his arms. And now, she couldn't help wondering what it would be like to

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be kissed by his arrogant, strong mouth?

But why should she wonder about a thing like that, when she was in love with Louis? She was going to marry Louis. No other man's kisses could mean anything to her!

She jumped into a taxi, her heart pounding as she told the driver, "Riveredge, please. Dr. Harrison's place."

It went right on pounding even after the taxi moved away from the station. She had a ridiculous feeling that she had just had a narrow escape from danger—that was deep in the golden eyes of a red-headed man.

And then she looked out the back window and saw him run across the sidewalk to a sleek, gray convertible. He followed her as far as the tall, stone gate posts of Riveredge. But when the taxi entered the private driveway to the sanitarium, the gray car turned, slowly, and headed back downtown.

The man was certainly persistent! He was also mysterious! His conduct exasperated her, but it stirred her to apprehension, too. There was trouble coming! She could sense it in the air, like thunder clouds, rolling up . . .

But she couldn't dismiss the man from her mind as merely someone who was trying to pick her up. *He thought I was someone he knew* . . . she mused. *And then, when I turned out not to be that person, he was angry and suspicious. He didn't follow me because he was attracted to me—he followed me because he wanted to know what my business in Bransford is!*

A few minutes later, Shelly began to wonder if everyone in Bransford was a little queer. Because gray-haired Miss Ashley, Louis' head nurse, looked up at her with an expression of absolute amazement when the receptionist led her into her office.

"Miss Ashley, this is Miss St. Claire," the girl said. And Miss Ashley said, in an incredulous voice, "Miss St. Claire?"

"But I thought you were expecting me today, Miss Ashley?" Shelly said in a confused voice.

"Oh, yes . . ." Miss Ashley said.

"I was expecting you—but I didn't expect you to look the way you do."

Shelly's dark eyebrows went up, half amused, half puzzled.

And the older nurse explained, "I mean—I didn't expect you to be so perfectly beautiful, Miss St. Claire, so like—" And then, she cut herself off, sharply, leaving Shelly more puzzled than ever.

Of course, Louis had warned her that she would probably be a surprise to the staff at Riveredge. But Shelly knew she had been more than a mere surprise to Miss Ashley. She had been a shock! She had been a shock to the auburn-haired young man in the railroad station, too. And both of them disapproved of her. But Miss Ashley, unlike the young man, was trying to hide her disapproval. Miss Ashley apparently believed in minding her own business.

She said, "Well—welcome to Riveredge, Miss St. Claire. It's nice to have you with us."

Shelly was given a pleasant, sunny room in Veranda House, where the nurses lived.

Since she had been assigned to night duty for the first week, she had several hours on her hands and decided to walk around and explore the town.

SHE LEFT the hospital grounds and strolled along the neat, tree-lined streets. Bransford was a pretty, prosperous-looking town, and Shelly decided that she liked it.

She was standing in front of a specialty shop admiring a display of evening gowns, when a mocking voice said:

"The blue gown is the one for you, definitely. Its the sort of thing Christine always chose—ladylike, and so smooth. And I suppose your object is to look

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just as much like Christine as possible?"

Shelly whirled. And there he was again, golden eyes taunting, coolly contemptuous, his good-looking mouth tight with a resentment she did not understand.

She said, bitterly, "Oh, no! Not *you* again! Is it going to be my unhappy fate to run into you everywhere I go in this town? I can't bear it!"

But her heart was pounding foolishly as she looked up at him, and she knew that there was a half-unwilling gladness within her at seeing him again.

"I get around," he said, unsmilingly, "Getting around is a part of my job. I'm on a newspaper here."

"Christine . . ." she asked, "You were muttering something about someone named Christine? I don't know any Christine. I don't know what you're talking about!"

"Maybe you never met her. But you know her!" the man insisted.

Shelly shook her dark head. "No. And why should you think I'd want to look like this Christine?" she asked, witih her chin high, "Why should you suppose that I'd want to wear the same type of clothes that some other girl wears?"

He laughed, but his dark-gold eyes were cold and unamused. "Because the resemblance between you and Christine is too close and too perfect to be a mere coincidence!" he said tersely. "It had to be planned—either by you or by Louis Harrison, or by both of you, working together!"

Shelly's eyes widened. Her bewilderment grew. But one thing was clear enough: This red-headed young man hated Louis! There was savage hostility in his tone as he mentioned his name.

"Louis Harrison used to be engaged to Christine—and now he's engaged to you, a dead ringer for Christine!" he said, accusingly.

Shelly gasped as shock tingled through her. "But—Louis didn't tell me he had ever been engaged to anyone else!" she said, and then was furious with herself for revealing so much to this stranger.

The man gave her a look that was partly quizzical and partly impatient. "Oh, come now! He brought you to Bransford for only one reason. To hurt Christine! It's so obvious! Only I don't intend to let him get away with it. I'm a friend of Christine's, and she's been hurt enough.

Shelly lifted her dark head defiantly. Her blue eyes blazed up at him. "You're wrong!" she flared, "Oh, you're all wrong! Louis is—he's just wonderful! He wouldn't want to hurt anyone. Maybe he was engaged to your friend Christine, and maybe I do look like her. But what of it? Men are apt to fall for the same type of girl over and over, until they find the one they want to marry. It isn't a crime, is it?"

The man laughed, coldly. "Stop kidding," he said, harshly, "What's in it for you, baby? What's the sauve doctor paying you to come here and pose as his fiancée? Whatever he's paying you, I'll double it, if you'll go away. You're a gun at Christine's back, a knife held against her heart. And I intend to remove you!"

Shelly gasped, as if he had struck her. Her stormy blue eyes clashed with his determined, angry topaz ones. She had never met any man she hated so much!

When she could get her breath, she said with icy dignity, "Nothing you can say or do will make me leave Bransford. I came here to marry Louis—and that's exactly what I am going to do! I happen to be in love with him, and he's in love with me."

"Love!" the red-headed man jeered, and he laughed again. "I might have known that Louis Harrison would always use love as currency! So he made you fall in love with him?"

Shelly lifted her chin. "Yes, and I'm proud to be in love with Louis!"

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"Oh, good Heavens!" the man said, in exasperation. He looked at her searchingly for another long moment, taking in the blue eyes that were hurt, in spite of her defiance; taking in the brave red mouth that was trembling a little.

Then he sighed. "So it's like that . . . Well, you'd better take the rest of this sitting down," he said, with surprising gentleness.

And before she could stop him, he took her arm and guided her across the sidewalk to the gray convertible. "Get in. We'll drive somewhere so that we can talk."

"But I don't know you!" Shelly gasped, as he started the motor. "I don't want to go anywhere with you!"

CHAPTER THREE

Dangerous Kisses

"I'M KIRK DIXON," he told her, as he swung the car out into the traffic. "My father owns *The Bransford Daily News*, and I work for him. I'm quite respectable, believe it or not. The cop on the next corner will speak to me as we go by. You can tell from that that I'm known in town, and not a suspicious character. What's your name? I didn't get it when I telephoned Miss Ashley to check up on you. She didn't quite know what to make of you. She's a local woman and, of course, knows Christine."

In a voice that dripped icicles, Shelly told him who she was.

They were stopped by cross traffic at the intersection, and the policeman called out, as Kirk had predicted. Then, he looked into the car and smiled politely at Shelly.

"Hello, Miss Abbott," he said, "Glad to see you back in town."

Shelly's startled gasp was covered by the roar of the motor as Kirk stepped on the gas. He grinned at her.

"See what I mean?" he asked. "You and Christine Abbott are so alike you could pose as a pair of Toni twins. That traffic cop has known Christine ever since he helped her across the street in her kindergarten days yet he mistook you for her. So it's no wonder I thought you were Christine at the railroad station this morning. By the way—have you forgiven me for that hug?"

To her annoyance, Shelly could feel the hot color in her cheeks as she remembered that moment in his arms. She looked at Kirk Dixon. And then she looked away again, quickly . . . because his golden eyes had a gay, challenging gleam that did disturbing things to her blood pressure. Her heart lurched queerly. He *was* attractive. And then she was furious with herself for thinking such a thing about a man she disliked.

She said, with sarcasm, "You and Christine must be *very* close friends! Or do you hug *all* the girls, Mr. Dixon?"

He smiled, slowly, but his golden eyes had a hard, dangerous shine. "Don't get smart," he said. "And call me Kirk. I intend to call you Shelly."

He didn't answer her jibe about Christine. And that made her curious. Was Kirk in love with Christine?

A sudden sharp pang, almost like jealousy, stabbed through her. But, of course, she didn't care if he adored Christine! It was Louis she cared about.

They had passed the residential section of the town now, were approaching a country club. Kirk turned down a winding lane that skirted the golf course.

He stopped by a low stone wall and he took a cigarette case from his pocket and held it out to Shelly. When the two cigarettes were lighted, he began:

"It's like this, Shelly. Christine Abbott and Louis Harrison were engaged. He was new in town after the war, and Christine fell madly in love with him. But they quarrelled, because Christine found out

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that Louis was still dating other women—a pretty nurse at his own hospital, a fashionable divorcée in a neighboring town . . . Louis resented the fact that Christine had dared to question him about those affairs, because he thinks that fiancées and wives should be submissive. He's the arrogant type.

"So they broke up, and Christine took it pretty hard. She was very ill, and her friends persuaded her to go to California to try to forget. In the meantime, Louis found you somewhere and persuaded you to come to Bransford as his fiancée."

Kirk paused for a moment and drew a long breath. His topaz eyes were looking straight at her.

"I'm sorry to hurt you, but you might as well face the truth—Louis won't marry you. He only wants to use you to punish Christine, and to make her jealous so that she'll come crawling back to him. He still intends to marry Christine!"

Shelly gasped, and then sat up very straight. Her eyes were dark in her white, white face. Her red mouth was like a scar.

"That's not true!" she cried. "Louis doesn't love Christine! He loves me!"

Kirk Dixon put a gentle hand on hers. She tried to jerk away, but he held it tightly for a moment longer.

"Shelly, I know that Louis doesn't love Christine," he said quietly. "But he doesn't love you, either. Louis Harrison doesn't love anybody except himself. He wants to marry Christine for her money and social position! You see, Christine Abbott is rich. Her parents are dead, and she has control of her own money. Louis wants that money."

He leaned forward and stubbed out his cigarette in the car ashtray.

"I DON'T believe you!" Shelly said stubbornly. "I don't believe that Louis is the kind of man you're saying he is. And I don't believe he still wants to marry Christine. Why would he become engaged to me in that case? His engagement to me only makes his break with her final, doesn't it?"

She took a long angry drag on her cigarette to steady herself.

Kirk laughed. "That's what he wants Christine to think," he told her, tersely. "Louis is a man who knows how to play upon a girl's emotions. He doesn't have any feelings himself; he's cruel and cold and conceited, but he knows all the answers. He's an old hand at the love game. He wants to make Christine so crazily jealous of you that she'll do anything to get him away from you. Louis wants Christine to come after him on her knees, you see. He doesn't want to go after her, because he intends to show her who is boss. As a matter of fact, Louis has known all along that Christine would take him back any day—if he would apologize. But Louis won't apologize—he's too egotistical. He wants Christine to be the abject one. He wants *her* to apologize to him for daring to criticize him!"

"You just want me to step out of the picture so that Christine can have Louis!" Shelly cried. "Probably, you're in love with her yourself—so you want her to have what she wants. Well, that's very noble of you, Mister Dixon. But I'm not the noble type myself. Why should I give up the man I want?"

Angrily, she tossed her cigarette out the car window.

"But I don't want Christine to get Louis!" Kirk said. "He'll ruin her life if she marries him. He'll spend her money on other loves and break her heart."

"Well, then, just keep out of the situation and *I'll* marry Louis," Shelly said.

Kirk sighed, impatiently. "But, Louis won't marry you! Can't you get that through your beautiful head? Christine will be back in town any day now. And when she sees you stepping out with Louis—in her shoes, practically, she'll be

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so jealous and so heartsick that she just won't have any pride or any common sense left. Your presence in Bransford will force her into action. And that's just the way Louis has it planned!

"But if you stay out of the picture Christine may have enough pride not to give in to Louis. She has held out so far. She had spirit enough to go away. And she had sense enough to date other men."

"Were you one of those other men?"

"Yes."

Now the whole thing was very clear. Kirk wanted Christine for himself.

A queer little pang shot through Shelly again, stabbing at her heart. And again she wondered why she should give a darn what this interfering, redhead did?

Kirk had been watching her expressive face where the conflicting emotions were revealed.

Suddenly he said, "I had you tagged as an adventuress, but I'm beginning to think that you're just a moon-struck kid who was taken in by Louis' smooth line and glamor. You're even younger than Christine—not much more than a baby, really!"

There was something in his tone that startled her and thrilled her . . . a sort of protectiveness, almost tenderness. Her heart began to pound.

Unexpectedly, he moved closer to her. His hand touched the silky-smooth top of her head, slid slowly, caressingly, through the dark, soft curls, tangling his fingers in them. His eyes were bright and for a long, tense moment they seemed to burn down deep into hers. Her heartbeats were so unsteady that they almost frightened her. He was going to kiss her. She knew he was going to kiss her! But she made no move to stop him. His topaz eyes seemed to have a hypnotic power over her. She was engaged to Louis, she was in love with Louis, but she wanted Kirk to kiss her now!

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What was wrong with her? But she couldn't stop to wonder when she was caught up in the blazing excitement that burned in Kirk's golden eyes. His mouth came close to hers and she had wondered what it would be like to be kissed by this dynamic man.

IT WAS a blazing enchantment; a consuming fire she had never known before. It was sweet, sweet; it was a glorious madness that she couldn't help yielding herself up to. She was spell-bound by his charm.

She didn't know how many moments slipped away before she came to her senses. And then a hot wave of shame swept her. She put her small, unsteady hands against Kirk's shoulders and pushed him away.

What must he think of her? And why had she acted like an easy conquest? She had humiliated Louis—and herself, too, by yielding to Kirk Dixon's kisses. She had come to Bransford to marry Louis—and here she was, on her very first day in town, out on a country road in a parked car with another man! She hated herself—and Kirk Dixon, too.

They were enemies in spite of their kisses; in spite of his desire to hold her in his arms. He wanted to break up her romance with Louis.

Kirk was gently trying to draw her back into his arms again, but she jerked away from him.

"Please don't!" she said sharply.

He looked at her, wonderingly, "But, Shelly, why not?" he asked softly. "We go so well together. That wasn't just a casual kiss. Nothing quite like it ever happened to me before—and I suspect it's the same with you. We ought to be friends—"

So he knew that she was attracted to him against her will!

Her cheeks flamed, and she refused to meet his eyes.

She said, stiffly, "You're forgetting that I'm engaged to Louis—that I love him."

"No girl kisses a man the way you just kissed me if she's really in love with another man," Kirk reminded her.

His bluntness increased her humiliation. The note of masculine triumph in his voice infuriated her. He was so sure of himself! She tossed her head.

"You overestimate yourself!" she said cuttingly. "I didn't like your kisses and I don't like you, either! And now, will you please take me back to town?"

She saw a hard, angry glitter flash into his golden eyes. He gave a sharp laugh, furious, unamused.

"I'll do that—with pleasure," he said, turning away from her. "I guess I was right about you the first time."

On the way back to town he drove very fast as if he couldn't wait to be rid of her. Well, that was all right with her. She wanted to get away from him, too. She never wanted to see him again. She hated him for interfering in her life.

At the nurses' home, she slipped quickly out of his car and tried to hide the tears that were smarting her eyes.

She hurried up the walk and into the hall. And a voice from the living room called:

"Shelly!"

CHAPTER FOUR

The Sapphire Gown

STARTLED, and feeling strangely guilty, she looked up and saw Louis standing in the doorway. Louis, in a well-cut gray suit, looking suave and urbane and very handsome.

Shelly ran up to him, crying, "Louis! Oh, I didn't expect you so soon! Darling, it's wonderful to see you!"

Louis took her two hands in his and drew her into the living-room. Then he closed the door behind them.

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"And it's wonderful to see you . . . looking so beautiful, Shelly," he said, smilingly.

Her heart was knocking uneasily against her side. Had Louis seen her getting out of Kirk Dixon's car? Was he angry with her? Jealous? But he didn't look angry or jealous. He looked quite calm.

She lifted her face for his kiss. Was it her imagination, or did Louis hesitate for just a fraction of a second before he bent his smooth dark head and put his lips againt hers? And was it her imagination or were his lips cool and without passion? Or did they seem so only because of Kirk Dixon's ardent kiss?

Shelly could feel her cheeks flaming then, and she drew back. Why must she think of Kirk in this moment of reunion?

Louis said, "I have big plans for tonight, baby. We'll have dinner at the country club, and dance afterward. I want to show you off to the town, Shelly. I want everyone to see how gorgeous you are."

She said, "But, Louis, I'm on duty tonight."

His face darkened angrily. "How stupid of Miss Ashley!" he said. "She should have known that I wouldn't want you to have night duty. I'll tell her to change it, of course."

"Louis, I'm afraid I haven't a suitable gown—only uniforms and street dresses," Shelly said, distressed.

Louis smiled. "I didn't expect you to have a debutante's wardrobe, my sweet. So I bought a gown for you to wear tonight. Size twelve is right, isn't it?" he asked, picking up a box from a chair.

The box was tied with scarlet ribbon, and a curious premonition shot through Shelly as she untied it, because she recognized the name of the specialty shop. Somehow, she knew what she would see! It was the sapphire gown she had admired in the window that very afternoon! Again she heard Kirk Dixon's contemptuous voice: *The blue gown—It's the sort of thing Christine always chose. And I suppose your object is to look as much like Christine as possible?*

Shelly lifted the gown with unsteady hands. Was it a mere coincidence that Louis had bought it?

Shelly couldn't help but admire the simple classic lines of the gown. She could picture herself in it. There was a pair of blue satin sandals, and long blue gloves. The complete ensemble could not have cost Louis a cent less than three hundred dollars.

"What's the matter, don't you like it?" he asked.

Shelly's heart was strangely heavy. "It's lovely, Louis, but I can't take it from you—"

He laughed then. "Nonsense! We're engaged, aren't we? Why can't I buy you a present?"

He took the gown from her and put it back in the box, tying the scarlet ribbon again.

"Take these up to your room, Shelly. Rest for a while and then make yourself very beautiful for me," he said. "I'll be back around eight."

Shelly checked an impulse to say, "Yes, Doctor Harrison."

She took the box from him, and looked at him intently. "Louis, if you don't want me to work, and if you're going to insist on buying clothes for me—well, I'd feel better if we could be married right away."

His gray eyes darkened for a moment—with anger, Shelly thought. She knew he didn't like to be crossed, and she felt apprehensive. But then, he was smiling at her again.

"What a conventional little thing you are," he murmured lightly. "I'd like nothing better than to be married right away, my dear. But, as I told you in Hartville, I simply can't take time out for a honeymoon just now. I have a number of

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operations here at the hospital—and I'm going to Washington again, and then out to Hollywood."

He glanced at his wrist watch with an air of finality.

Tears came into Shelly's eyes. She felt as if she had been snubbed. She turned away and started to walk ahead of him out of the room.

But he caught her arm, imploringly. "Darling Shelly, don't be angry with me," he whispered.

He took her in his arms then, a little roughly, mussing her dark hair. Briefly, she knew again the black magic that Louis Harrison could weave over a girl's senses. She knew the soaring excitement; the dangerous fire of his kiss. It was a long, sophisticated kiss—a practiced kiss. From far away she seemed to hear again Kirk Dixon's voice. *He's an old hand at the love game . . .*

IT WAS EXACTLY as if Kirk had come into the room and thrown cold water over her.

She drew away, shivering. She was aware that she was tired and confused and unhappy.

Louis seemed unaware of her mood. His step was jaunty as he let himself out of the house. She heard him whistling as he strode down the walk to his car, a man well pleased with himself.

Her head ached as she started upstairs to her room. She told herself that it was because she hadn't had anything to eat since breakfast, but she knew that lack of food wasn't the only reason for her low mood.

She sat before her mirror and studied herself: the red up-curving mouth, the black-lashed blue eyes, the waving blue-black hair . . . and the perfect, patrician, turned-up nose that had made her a beauty instead of just another pretty girl.

She pushed the dark hair from her throbbing temples and thought, wearily: If I had my old nose back, I probably wouldn't look like Christine Abbott at all. I wish I had my old nose back. I wish I didn't look like her. Then Kirk wouldn't hate me—and he wouldn't think that Louis was just a horrible schemer, a fortune-hunter.

She turned very white, and her eyes were dark and troubled as the full impact of her own thoughts struck her. Louis had changed her nose and, by doing so, he had changed her completely!

"Let's face it," Shelly told herself, grimly, "You *didn't* look like Christine Abbott until Louis performed that operation. Perhaps there was a similarity in your coloring, height, weight and features—but you couldn't have passed as twins. Louis *wanted* you to look like Christine. He picked you because you were the one girl who could be made to look like her, and he made you over in her image."

She put her hands up over her face, shudderingly. Was Kirk right, then? Was she just a pawn in Louis' game of love?

"No!" Shelly argued with herself. "Louis loves you. You're unfair to him. You've let Kirk Dixon poison your mind. You've let him cast a black shadow over your love. If you loved Louis with all of your heart, you would believe in him. A girl should trust the man she loves. You should be ashamed of yourself!"

But her doubts persisted. They clung to her like ugly things in a nightmare.

She jumped up, restlessly and walked over to a window. The grounds of Riveredge were trim and clipped. Through the thinning trees, she caught a glimpse of a red-roofed cottage. She knew it must be the boathouse Louis had remodeled. He had told her that he had wanted a place of his own that was detached from the hospital. She wondered if she would live in that red-roofed cottage with Louis someday. He hadn't offered to show her his hideaway home. She hadn't even been through the hospital. It seemed a bit

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queer. But, of course, Louis was very busy.

Shelly ran a hot bath for herself and got into it, trying to relax. *Make yourself beautiful,* Louis had said. Doctor's orders!

She dressed very carefully, spending a long time on her makeup. The blue velvet gown fit like a dream, and it was by far the most expensive and the most becoming dress she had ever had in her life.

LOUIS' COOL gray eyes warmed with approval when he called for her. "Mmm . . . Very nice, my dear!" he said. "Very effective, indeed!"

But somehow Shelly was chilled instead of warmed by his admiration. It seemed to be such a brisk, business-like kind of admiration! It was disappointing to a girl who had hoped for a lover's tenderness; a lover's excited pride in her appearance.

"I didn't bring you flowers," he said, as he took her out to his car, "I didn't want you to look overdressed. The casual effect is best, I think."

Shelly felt more and more like an actress who had been hired to put on an act.

But that wasn't so. She was just a girl who had fallen in love with a sauve, gray-eyed man; a little nurse who had fallen in love with a glamorous doctor.

All eyes were upon them as they entered the country club. All eyes were upon them as they sipped their cocktails and ordered dinner.

Shelly caught a glimpse of Kirk Dixon, suddenly, on the dance floor. He was dancing with a girl in a ruby gown that was a red duplicate of the one Shelly was wearing! The girl had blue-black hair, the same color as Shelly's and her face was so like Shelly's face that she had the eerie sensation that she was looking at herself in a mirror unexpectedly!

Shock tingled through her. The girl in Kirk's arms was like some fantastic copy of Shelly St. Claire! Or was Shelly a fantastic copy of the lovely girl in Kirk Dixon's arms?

She felt dazed. It was a very queer experience to see a girl who could have masqueraded successfully as your own self.

"Louis, who is the girl in the red gown?" she gasped.

But it was a silly question. Because, of course, she knew. The girl with Kirk was Christine Abbott. Who else could it be?

Louis didn't answer, because Kirk and Christine danced past their table at that moment. And Christine slipped from Kirk's arms and walked back to the table, forcing him to follow her.

Christine Abbott's blue eyes were too bright, and her soft voice was queerly breathless as she announced: "Louis, I want to meet my twin."

Her exquisite face was haggard, in spite of her smile. Her gaiety was forced. Shelly saw her lips tremble; saw how white she was, how desperately she was fighting for composure.

Louis stood up. "This is Shelly St. Claire, Christine," he said. "Shelly, dear, I want you to know Christine Abbott, an old friend of mine." And then he added, sauvely, "The resemblance between you two girls really is amazing, now that I see you together. Funny . . . I wasn't aware of the likeness before."

He's lying, Shelly thought with sudden cold sureness. And she waited for pain to stab through her at this blunt disenchantment. But there was no pain. There was only pity within her—pity for Christine Abbott. *She loves him too much,* Shelly thought. *Too much . . . and he knows it!*

Louis pulled out a chair for Christine. "Sit down and have dinner with us," he invited, turning to include Kirk in the invitation.

"No, thank you, Christine and I are with a party," Kirk said sharply before Christine could speak. "We'll have to go back to our own table."

He put a hand on Christine's arm, and

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Shelly sensed the tenderness and the protection in the gesture. His golden eyes were cool as they flicked over Shelly. No one would ever have guessed, watching them together, that he had ever held her in his arms, that they had ever shared a sublime moment of ecstasy.

Shelly's heart began to ache with a strange dull ache. She felt lost and sad.

But Christine jerked away from Kirk. She was looking up at Louis, drowning in his gray gaze. She was a girl who was wearing her heart on her sleeve, and she didn't seem to care who knew it.

"Perhaps we could have just one cocktail with you," she said, softly "to celebrate my homecoming. I missed the town . . . and you."

"Wonderful!" Louis murmured gaily, and he signaled the waiter.

He turned back to Shelly then. "You know Kirk Dixon, of course," he said, smoothly, and a little chill ran along her spine.

So Louis *had* seen her getting out of Kirk's car that afternoon! Why hadn't he mentioned it? Why was Louis always so crafty, so careful—like some cold and bloodless spider spinning a web?

CHAPTER FIVE

Journey's End

THEY HAD champaigne cocktails, but there was none of the sparkling gaiety that goes with champagne. Kirk was furious at the setup and made no attempt to conceal his fury. Christine was fluttery and excited. Her laughter was high-pitched, and she smoked one cigarette after another.

Shelly's emotions were mixed. She was half sorry for Christine, and half sorry for herself. She was angry with Kirk, and she was angry with Louis. Louis alone seemed pleased and serene. Clearly, things were working out his way.

She was relieved when Louis and Christine got up to dance, and she was left with Kirk.

"I see you took my advice," he said then, scornfully, staring at her blue gown. "I told you it was the sort of thing Christine would buy."

Shelly's heart hurt as if it had received a physical blow. She recoiled from the too-bright mockery in his smile; the deliberate insolence in his tone. She felt the hot, indignant color flaming in her cheeks.

"I wouldn't take your advice about anything!" she flared.

But, even while she glared at him, the hurt inside her was growing. She resented that hurt, and she resented Kirk Dixon. Why couldn't he be tender and sweet and protective with her, the way he was with Christine? And that foolish little pain jabbed through her again. That pain that was so like—Yes, so like jealousy.

Jealousy! Suddenly Shelly's heart began to thunder as she faced the truth. She was jealous of Christine—jealous of Kirk's tenderness for her! She was jealous because, somewhere along the line, she had fallen madly in love with Kirk herself!

Oh, no! Shelly thought in panic. *It's absurd, ridiculous! It can't be!*

But in her heart she knew it was neither absurd nor ridiculous, and that it could be. Kirk Dixon was a very attractive young man. He had a wonderful quality of warmth and humanness. That virile quality drew people to him—like an open fire on a winter night—a lovely fire at which you could warm your cold hands and your lonely heart.

Shelly knew now that she had been aware of Kirk's particular brand of charm right from the start. She remembered how regretful she had been in the railroad station that his greeting had not been truly for her. Even in the beginning, she had known subconsicously that Kirk Dixon

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had something she wanted desperately.

She wanted his love!

She was shaking violently inside. She reached for her cocktail and sipped it to steady herself. He must never guess that he had her love! He didn't want her. He wanted Christine, who had eyes only for Louis.

Shelly watched Louis and Christine as they danced. Louis, tall, handsome, arrogant, his dark head bent attentively over Christine, a satisfied little smile on his lips. She was lovely in her dark-red gown—a bit too thin, perhaps, a bit too fragile-looking. But now her cameo face had an exquisite pale-pink glow and there were stars in her eyes as she smiled up at Louis.

SHELLY GLANCED at Kirk to see how he was taking it. His handsome mouth was stern, and his jaw was tight, and his topaz eyes had banked, smoldering fires. He finished his cocktail angrily, all in one gulp. She saw one of his hands curl into a fist.

"I ought to take a punch at him!" he said, under his breath, "He's been asking for it a long time."

"Why don't you?" Shelly asked, tonelessly.

He shot her a look of surprise. He hesitated. Then, he gave a short laugh, bitter, painful. "What good would it do? Would it make Christine see him as he is—or you? Girls can be complete fools about a man like Louis. They'll believe what they want to believe. No, my game has to be a waiting game, Shelly. I'll stand by and pick up the pieces."

"I wish—" she began, and checked herself hurriedly. She had been about to confess that she wished she had someone wonderful like him to stand by her.

Then, to her horror, her eyes filled with tears. Desolately, she turned her head away. But they couldn't escape him. He looked at her gravely, and his topaz eyes were without that usual spark of antagonism. He covered one of her hands with his as it lay on the table.

"Shelly, if you ever need anything here in Bransford, come to me. I mean, if things pile up on you . . . if you get hurt . . ."

If she got hurt! There was irony in that. She *was* hurt. And Kirk was the last man in the world who could cure that hurt. Because, unconsciously, he had caused it. It hurt to be in love with him. It hurt to want him—and to know that he wanted somebody else.

She drew her hand away because his touch was bitter-sweet. She wanted so much to leave her hand in his hand forever! She forced herself to smile at him. There was an upthrust gallantry about her chin.

"Thanks, Kirk."

"Dance?" he asked.

She shook her head. She couldn't trust herself in his arms. He might hear the pounding of her heart, and wonder. She might break down and cling to him. No, she would stay out of Kirk's arms. He had nothing to offer her but consoling friendliness—and that wasn't what she wanted.

His face stiffened. He was watching Christine dance by in Louis' arms. His eyes were bright and hard again, burning as if he had a fever.

Christine looked as if she were dancing on a pink cloud. She looked as if she wanted to go on dancing forever with Louis. But Louis had more earthy ideas. The waiter was arriving with the first course and Shelly saw Louis stop abruptly and lead Christine over to their table.

"Dinner at last!" he said, eagerly. "And I'm starved."

Shelly saw the sparkle disappear from Christine's blue eyes. She saw the lovely excited flush fade from her cheeks.

Louis *was* cruel! Why hadn't she realized it before?

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He's horrible, and I hate him a little, she thought. *I can understand now why Kirk hates him.*

When Shelly and Louis were alone there was a definite feeling of restraint between them. She ate and drank mechanically, but everything was tasteless. Louis wanted to dance, so they danced. They were a stunning couple, and Shelly knew everybody was staring at them. There were murmurs, whispers, questions—just as Louis had known.

As they passed one table, Shelly heard a woman say in astonishment: "Why, she's just as beautiful as Christine! And so like her! How disturbing for poor, dear Christine to have a rival like that!"

The man with the woman laughed. "My dear, the new love has an edge on Christine. She's younger, and she has a better figure. After all, Christine must be getting on for twenty-five . . ."

How fiendishly clever Louis was! He must have known that people would say things like that—and that the comments would reach Christine's ears sooner or later.

Suddenly, Shelly's head began to ache and she was sick of the whole hateful situation.

"Louis, I'm tired. I'd like to go home now," she said.

She had to get away from everyone and think things out by herself.

Louis made no objection. He took her out to his car.

We put on a good enough show for one night, Shelly thought, wryly.

She was practically certain now that Louis didn't love her; that he had never loved her. But she didn't care. Parting with Louis would mean nothing. But how could she leave Bransford and say good-bye to Kirk, when the time came?

IN HER OWN ROOM at last, she lighted a cigarette and sat down in a chair near the window, trying to think. The soft June breeze laden with the smell of roses rippled the curtains. But it was lost to Shelly. She was too heartsick to feel the magic of the June night.

Her thoughts whirled in unending circles. What ought she to do? She knew now that she didn't love Louis; that she couldn't marry him. But she didn't know, actually, whether Louis wanted to marry her or not.

She lighted another cigarette from the end of the first one. One thing became clear: "I ought to have it out with Louis!" she said aloud.

At that moment a light flared in the windows of the cottage down by the river. It seemed like a signal, a green light urging her to go ahead.

She stepped out of her evening gown and high-heeled slippers and into her tweed suit and walking shoes. That light in the cottage meant that Louis was at home. Alone, probably, at this hour, and they could talk. Louis deserved a chance to defend himself from her suspicions. Perhaps he wasn't such a heel as she was beginning to believe.

But Louis wasn't alone. Through the casement windows Shelly saw Louis and a slender girl in a red gown.

Christine was walking restlessly up and down. But, as Shelly watched, Louis reached out and pulled Christine into his arms.

"You know I love you, Christine!" he said. "Stop tormenting me, and stop tormenting yourself! We belong together. We can make a new start. Please, darling, say yes to me!"

"But what about Shelly?" Christine asked, "You're engaged to her, now, Louis."

"Oh, that was just a rebound romance," Louis said impatiently, "I was attracted to Shelly only because she was the image of you, darling. But it's you I want. Shelly doesn't count."

"You're heartless, Louis!" Christine

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said, but she lifted her face for his kiss.

Louis had won. Louis had what he wanted now. Clever Louis! Foolish Christine! Foolish Shelly!

Slowly, she turned her back on the picture framed in the window and started to walk across the lawn to her room.

KIRK had been so right about Louis. Louis had lied to Shelly, and he had lied to Christine, too. When he said, "I was attracted to Shelly only because she was the image of you." Because Shelly hadn't been born in the image of Christine. Louis had made her over in that image—so that he could use her to win Christine back. And not because he loved Christine for herself, but because she was rich. All the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle that was Doctor Louis Harrison fitted now, and Shelly understood his character clearly. He was arrogant, conceited, cruel. He was greedy for money and for power. Although he knew all the tricks of the love game, he had never really loved any girl—and he never would, for Louis was in love with himself.

Kirk had tried to warn her, but she was so sure she knew all of the answers. Her heart stabbed her. She had been so hateful to Kirk.

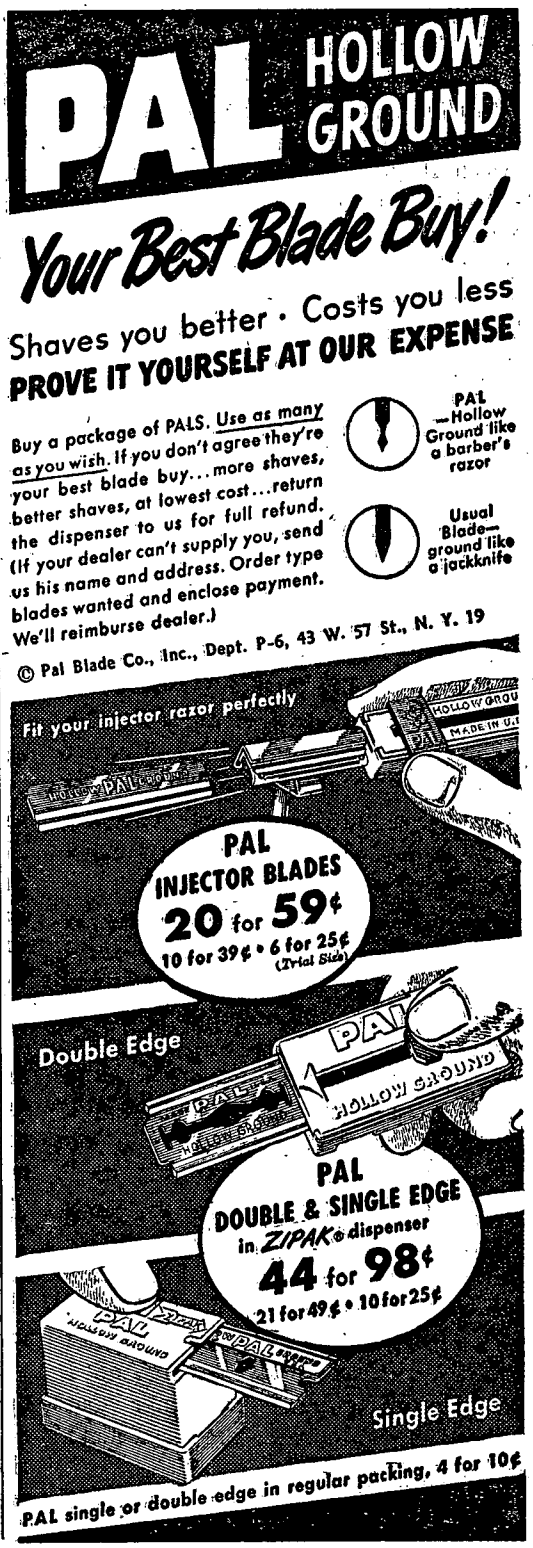
Perhaps she should call him and ask him to meet her for a few minutes before she left town, just to tell him she was sorry. She wondered if that would seem too obvious an excuse to see him again? And then she decided that she didn't care.

"I'd do anything to see him again!" she told herself fiercely, "I won't let my silly pride stand in the way!"

Hot tears slid down her cheeks and she wept silently as she found her way back to Veranda House.

She called him from the downstairs phone and her heart lifted at the sound of his warm, deep voice.

She said as casually as she could, "Kirk, I'm leaving town tonight. Could you meet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Buy a package of PALS. Use as many as you wish. If you don't agree they're your best blade buy... more shaves, better shaves, at lowest cost... return the dispenser to us for full refund. (If your dealer can't supply you, send us his name and address. Order type blades wanted and enclose payment. We'll reimburse dealer.)
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Fit your injector razor perfectly
PAL INJECTOR BLADES
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(Trial Size)
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44 for 98¢
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me at the railroad station in fifteen minutes? There's something I want to say to you before I go away—"

"Shelly, are you all right?" Kirk's voice was sharp. "You sound as if you have been crying. Of course, I'll meet you."

"I'm okay, Kirk. In fifteen minutes, then . . ."

"Shelly, wait!" he shouted. "Don't hang up. Promise me that you won't go away without talking to me first. Promise!"

"I promise, Kirk," she said, surprised at his urgency. "I *want* to see you."

She called a taxi then, and hurried upstairs to pack her clothes. She left the blue gown hanging in the closet.

Kirk was waiting for her in the station. She looked up at him—big, wide-shouldered, auburn-haired, wonderful, and her heart somersaulted. She thought, incredulously: *Was it really only this morning that I met him for the first time—in this exact spot, almost?* It seemed to her that Kirk had been in her life and in her heart forever. She was trembling.

"Shelly, you're running away," he said. "From Louis? If he's hurt you I think I'll kill him!"

She was astonished at his vehemence. She said, with sudden unashamed honesty, "Yes, I'm running away, Kirk. But not from Louis. Louis doesn't matter to me any more. I'm running away . . . from you. But before I leave I want to say I'm sorry! I was stubborn and stupid. I know I'm partly to blame because you lost your girl—and I know you hate me."

"Wait a minute!" Kirk said. "Take it easy, baby!" He was smiling down at her and his golden eyes were half tender, half teasing. "You're a little confused, Shelly, and you're getting me confused. I don't hate you, darling. I love you! And I haven't lost my girl . . . yet. That's what I'm here for . . . to make sure that I don't lose her!"

Shelly drew a long breath. Her heart was spinning, and Kirk's warm golden eyes were making her head spin, too. Had he really called her darling? Had he said, "I love you?" Or was she dreaming?

"But you don't understand, Kirk." she began, breathlessly, "Christine and Louis are together again. I saw them just a few minutes ago at his cottage. She's taking him back. So you've lost her . . ."

"Shelly, I never wanted Christine for myself!" Kirk said. "I was never in love with her—if that's what you think. We were friends, that's all. We grew up together. She was the girl next door. Years ago, I got into the habit of looking after her as if she were my kid sister. So, of course, I was burned up at the idea of Louis marrying her for her money. She deserves better than that."

"But, naturally, I thought you loved Christine—because you hated Louis so!" Shelly gasped.

"I hated him all right!" Kirk said, grimly. "And I hated him even more after I met you. Because, you see, I realized soon after we met that you were the one girl in the world for me, darling, and that I wanted you. After I fell in love with you, it almost drove me crazy to think that you were in love with Louis. I was doubly determined, then, to break up your romance with him.

"Remember, I told you that mine had to be a waiting game? I was waiting for you to get over your infatuation for Louis and turn to me. And, somehow, I knew, after our wonderful kiss, that you would turn to me someday."

"Oh, Kirk, darling, I love you so!" she whispered. "That's why I was running away—because I loved you so much it hurt me."

Suddenly he had her in his arms. His lips met hers in a warm, sweet kiss, and Shelly knew she wasn't going anywhere after all. This was journey's end for her heart.

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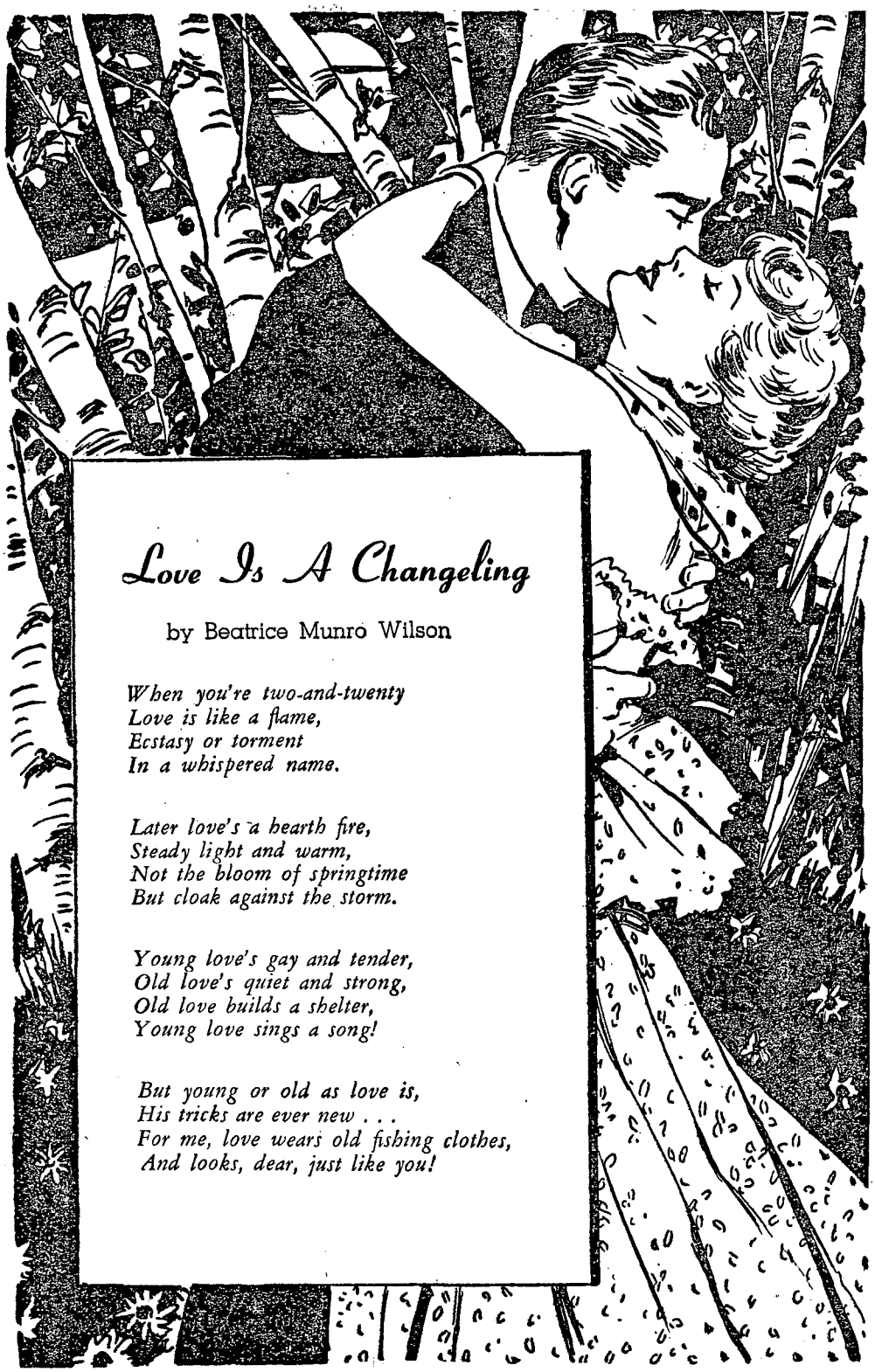

Love Is A Changeling

by Beatrice Munro Wilson

When you're two-and-twenty
Love is like a flame,
Ecstasy or torment
In a whispered name.

Later love's a hearth fire,
Steady light and warm,
Not the bloom of springtime
But cloak against the storm.

Young love's gay and tender,
Old love's quiet and strong,
Old love builds a shelter,
Young love sings a song!

But young or old as love is,
His tricks are ever new . . .
For me, love wears old fishing clothes,
And looks, dear, just like you!

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Isle of Golden Dreams

By ELAINE HEYWARD

Jerri's dreams were buried in the dead past, but a cocksure Cassanova dug them up and gilded them with magic.

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He grinned down at her impudently. "Sorry I kept you waiting, baby."

CHAPTER ONE

Stranger in Paradise

THE GULF OF MEXICO glittered like a hard blue mirror beneath the intense summer sun. Long fingers of heat reached out and pressed against the smooth white cheeks of the girl at the helm of a small launch.

But Jerri Arnold was not concerned about the heat, as the boat cut a smooth path through the waters, leaving the little island in the distance. Jerri's mind was on other, more important things.

What would he be like—this Duke Barron whom she was picking up on the

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mainland? She was merely taking an old friend's word for his ability and integrity. She knew absolutely nothing about him.

No—her lips thinned—she did know something about him. And she didn't particularly like what she knew.

She thought back to the corespondence about Duke Barron. Uncle Pete had written his friend George Harvey, who headed a mining syndicate in the States, asking him to recommend a good mining engineer, and one who could be trusted, since the island was vulnerable and unprotected. Uncle Pete had stated the salary, a generous one.

George Harvey had written back that he had just the man. That his man would come.

Jerri's sudden happy tears had shut out the remainder of the letter momentarily. With someone to extract the gold, the fulfillment of her dream was now near.

And then she read the rest.

But—George Harvey wrote—since the little island off the coast of Yucatan lay in the hurricane belt and had twice been flattened by the vicious storms, his man, Duke Barron, felt that there existed an element of risk and danger. He felt that he was justified in asking for a percentage of the take in addition to his salary, and a clause in the contract stipulating that if a big blow gave warning of turning into a hurricane, he was not bound to stay on.

"Justified? A nice way to get around calling yourself a chiseler," Jerri stormed, "and a—a coward!"

Uncle Pete patted her head. "I know, honey. He's obviously not the man we hoped for. But he must be a good engineer and trustworthy or George wouldn't recommend him. And we don't know where to get another." He rubbed his chin thoughtfully. "Far as a hurricane— t'aint at all likely. Far as his price, we'd better pay it, and have a little less to sink into your—er—dream."

A little less, when even the most might not be enough. Because Jerri held the fear that the paystreak might not prove to be anything near a bonanza.

But in the end, she had heeded Uncle Pete's advice. She had gone the five miles to the mainland and mailed her letter accepting Duke Barron's terms.

That night Jerri got out Paul's trophies, and the scrapbook of clippings about him —all that she had left of Paul now. Through her tears, as she looked at them, winged a sudden hope. Uncle Pete had not mentioned to his friend what the gold was to be used for. But when this Duke person saw these, heard what she planned to do, why even the hardest person would surely be touched, would be willing to eliminate that devasting percentage of the take to be in on a memorial to a valliant hero!

NOW, as she neared the little native port on the coast of Yucatan, she tried to carry this conviction with her, but she felt uneasy, unsure.

As she cut the motor of the launch and slid the boat in beside the rickety wooden pier, she saw a man standing there. Because his eyes had been watching her progress, she knew at once that this was Duke Barron.

She felt a distinct shock of surprise. Though George Harvey had not mentioned Duke's years, she had somehow expected him to be an older man. Duke Barron couldn't be more than twenty-seven or eight. He was tall, and possessed of a tough, wiry leanness. His hair was blond and close cropped. His eyes were amazingly blue against the hard, brown planes of his face.

She tossed him the rope from the bow, and he caught it in mid-air, twisting it around a pillar of the pier with expert deftness. She scrambled up the rickety ladder.

"Hello. You're Duke Barron, aren't you? I'm Jerri Arnold."

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It was his turn to look surprised. "Jerri Arnold? But George always spoke of you as little Jerri. I thought you'd be someone in a pinafore and pigtails!"

Jerri laughed. "I was when he knew me. I guess he'd forgotten how many years had intervened."

"Umm—" Duke muttered, and his glance moved slowly over her, from her shinning golden head to the pink toes protruding from her sandals.

Jerri moved uncomfortably. She didn't like the look. It was bold. Too bold.

"Shall we get going?" she said rather stiffly.

He tossed his luggage into the boat, and followed her down the ladder. "Want I should run this thing?" he asked, moving up to the helm.

"You can operate a launch?"

"Sure thing," he boasted. "Just one of my many capabilities."

She thought, slightly annoyed, "Pretty sure of yourself, aren't you?" and took the wheel herself.

When she set her course, Jerri sat down on the seat beside him. "I suppose you're curious to know about this island, and the whole set-up."

He tossed one long leg comfortably over the other, and grinned impudently. "I'm much more curious to know about *you*."

Jerri bit her lip, and decided to ignore his remark. "Years ago my father obtained a hundred-year lease on this island. He had hoped to start a banana plantation. But twice, just when the trees were starting to bear, a hurricane flattened the island. So we moved away—"

She gave Duke Barron a little look. "Not because we were afraid, but because we were broke. When my parents died, I fell heir to the lease. But I didn't come back to the island, not until a year ago. Then my fiancé, and my only living relative, Uncle Pete, and I decided we'd try the banana venture again. Since none of the vicious storms had hit the island for years, we decided that perhaps the spawning center of hurricanes had moved on, if not—" Again she gave him a look. "At any rate, we were not afraid!"

BUT DUKE BARRON obviously didn't get the little thrust. A bushy eyebrow inched up. "A fiancé? You mean you're engaged, and—"

Her voice was small. "My fiancé is dead."

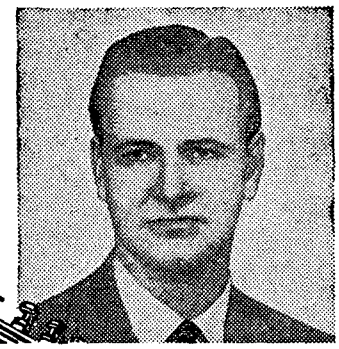
"Oh—I'm sorry." Almost he sounded as if he were. But in the next moment he had moved along the seat a little closer. "Still—with no fiancé in the offing it does make matters simpler, doesn't it?"

There was no mistaking what he meant. Two spots of color formed high on her cheeks. But she still decided to ignore him.

"My fiancé kept his job in the States, to

BAND LEADER SWITCHES TO BLEND LEADER

AMARILLO, Texas—Billy F. Briggs, Amarillo band leader, has switched to Calvert Reserve. "Lighter, smoother, milder," he says. "Calvert is tops for moderate drinking."



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get together more money for our venture. Uncle Pete and I came down here to get things started. When the trees were set out, Paul—my fiancé, gave up his job and came down. But before we could get married, he—he died."

She paused, and words rushed to her lips, but she checked them. She was not ready yet to tell Duke Barron about Paul.

She went on, "It was right after that, that Uncle Pete and I discovered the gold. And—well—it seemed more important than struggling for years with banana trees."

"Natch," Duke Barron agreed, nodding. "Gold buys mighty important pretties, like mink coats, and diamond bangles, and—" he licked his lips, "and champagne!"

So Duke Barron thought that was what her gold was going for. Perhaps she shouldn't blame him too much then for making his demands so high. Well, when he knew differently . . .

Again she caught up the trend of her conversation. "Uncle Pete broke his leg right after we'd discovered the gold deposit, and couldn't do anything. But even if he hadn't, neither of us knew anything about mining. We just had to have help!"

"Well, you've come to the right guy for help. In fact," he leaned back and chuckled a little, "I've got a hunch little Duke can be of help in more ways than one!"

She looked up at him, her eyes questioning his last statement.

Duke Barron leaned a little toward her. "A pretty girl, a lonely isle, and gold!" His arm slid along the back of the bench close to her shoulders. "What more could a man ask? What more—"

Jerri jumped up, her cheeks flaming. She had one wild impluse to turn the launch around and drop this arrogant, fresh individual right back on the pier again. And then she thought of the gold and she stilled the angry impulse. Surely, after he knew about Paul and her aim, he would feel pretty shamefaced about his forward actions.

But in the meantime, she wondered uncomfortably, as she took the wheel, would he give her trouble?

Obviously Duke Barron had no intention of putting himself to that much exertion. He stretched his long arms and legs into a relaxed position and regarded Jerri with good-natured, mild amusement.

She took a long relieved breath. And yet, oddly, his utterly casual indifference left her a little piqued.

THE ISLAND came into view at last. It was a small bit of land set down into hard blue sea. Waves moved in and broke languidly against the hot sands, as if any more exertion were unthinkable in this heat.

A man with bushy white hair and stiff beetling brows that jutted above bright black eyes stood on the island's small wooden pier. He leaned heavily on a cane.

Jerri docked the launch, and Duke followed her up the ladder with sure-footed ease. Everything about him was so sure, she thought with a trace of annoyance.

She introduced the two men. Uncle Pete, shading his eyes from the glare, was carefully scrutinizing the stranger, weighing, and reserving his opinion.

But when Duke said, "How do you do, sir," and grasped his hand firmly, Jerri knew he had made the first hurdle with the old man. Because Uncle Pete had always said, "Anyone who grasps your hand as if he means it, is a man!"

They moved up through the trees that stood stock still in the hot, breathless air. The house they called home was small, and of rough construction. Paul had planned to build her a new one, but now . . . She felt the familiar crying stab of pain at her loss.

Uncle Pete was telling Duke he must be tired, to sit down in the cool of the

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porch and rest and he'd fix him a long cool one. Tomorrow . . .

But Duke Barron, standing in the center of his luggage, shook his close-cropped head. "I came here to do a job, and I'd like to give a look-see and know what I'm up against."

Uncle Pete nodded approval. Jerri felt some of the tenseness leave her. Then Duke Barron really was interested in his job here. In that case he would have his mind on it—and not on her!

She walked with him over the rich black earth and through the small, sprouting banana trees to the other side of the island. He seemed to have forgotten her existence as he studied the land around him with a puzzled frown.

"I suppose it's unusual to find gold on a tropical island, isn't it?" she asked.

"In a way—yes. But gold is any place where there are, or have been, rocks."

The island was not rocky, but covered with rich, black soil. That was what seemed to puzzle him, and had puzzled her and Uncle Pete. But there *was* gold. They had had it assayed.

At last they stopped by a deep excavation. "Here," Jerri said, "is where we found the gold."

Duke looked at her quizzically, and she went on to explain. "I'm sort of an amateur archaeologist. I found some ancient trophies on this spot, and figuring a tribe must have lived here at one time, I decided to do a bit of excavating and see if I could unearth anything more. I didn't, but when I got down to that level," she pointed to the bottom of the pit, "I picked up some gravel with gold in it."

Duke climbed down into the pit. Jerri moved back into the shade. It was quite a while before he came up again, perspiring, but obviously satisfied.

"The way I figure it," he said, wiping his face, "is that this island was once a part of the mainland—a volcano really. That gravel was the bed of a stream. Then the sea slipped in, and made the volcanic mountain-top an island. In time it erupted, and covered the land with this rich, black soil."

"I see," Jerri said. And she did—that is, she saw why George Harvey had recommended Duke Barron. He knew his business, all right.

He was thoughtfully running his fingers over a piece of ore. "I could be wrong, of course. But I don't think this pay streak will be exactly a bonanza. Oh, you'll probably extract a tidy sun—" he named a round figure, "but somehow, I doubt if more."

So her fears were confirmed. Even the most was not enough! And with that huge percentage out for Duke—desperation welled in her. She had to change his mind!

During dinner, Duke's mind was entirely on the project at hand, as he discussed driving shafts and drilling and blasting with Uncle Pete.

AFTER DINNER, Uncle Pete looked longingly at his checker board. It was his only pasttime, and Jerri played the game with him every night. But not tonight. Uncle Pete knew what she had in mind, and said he guessed he'd run along to bed.

Now was the time to tell Duke Barron about Paul, and her project. Her heart was beating thickly. He *must* see it her way!

She smiled a little tremulously at him across the table, across the flickering coal oil lamp. "Would you like to get your mind off the job, and onto something else for a while?"

"You know, baby, you took the words right out of my mouth. Only I can't do it this far away!" He got up, taking his own sweet time, and ambled around beside her. He looked down at her with an intimate gleam in his eyes, "I always say there's a time for work—then comes a

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time for play!" His words were very soft.

Her cheeks flared with hot, angry color. "I wanted to talk to you about my fiancé," she said stiffly.

Duke sat down beside her, his shoulder brushing hers. "I'd much rather talk about *us.*"

She did not reply, but got up with deliberation, and walked over to a small cabinet. Unlocking it, she took out a thin scrapbook and a leather box. She came back and laid them on the table.

Duke clapped his hand to his head and groaned. "And I thought you were going after a drink. For gosh sakes, what's this stuff?"

"My fiancé's."

She opened up the box and took out medal after medal, arranging them in a row. She opened the book filled with newspaper clippings. Her hands trembled over the heart-breaking, precious things.

And then she began to talk, in low, muted tones. This medal, this first silver one, Paul Flood had received as a boy of ten for saving a little girl from a runaway horse. This one came when he was in his teens, for risking his life in a fire to rescue an old man. This one was for a similar risk, that one for another. And then came the war years, with more medals and newspaper clippings pasted in a book to testify to each heroic deed. And then the final one, the one where Paul had attempted to save a drowning native woman in that little seaport town of Yucatan. Two days later the tide had washed up his body.

Throughout the telling, Duke had remained intently still. And she thought; he's seeing the picture. He's touched.

Jerri's voice was choked and her eyes filled with tears. "You see, I wanted you to know what a wonderful man he was—always thinking, always risking himself for others!"

"Wonderful? Baby, in my language, he was a sap!"

She jerked her head up, startled. Duke Barron's eyes were filled with cold mockery.

For a moment she was too stunned to speak. Then she said, with her hands tight on the table, "Maybe you better explain that remark."

"Sure. He was a fool to play the hero, that's all." His chin squared off. "What good is it doing him now?"

"That's not the point. He lived according to his conscience."

Duke shrugged, and lit a cigarette, "Well, everyone to his own."

"Obviously then—" her voice was lashed with scorn, "you've never ever practiced any selflessness."

His chin thrust out. "Oh, haven't I? You'd be surprised. That's why I'm fed up. But *fed*!"

"Well?"

HE DREW viciously on his cigarette. "Yeah. I started out life with a naïve philosophy like your Paul's. I was mining for a guy who was working on a shoestring. The equipment was antiquated and there was danger of a shaft cave-in. But I worked against the odds, and for little money. Then it happened—the shaft did cave in. For months I lay in a hospital. Oh, but my boss was grateful—if he struck it rich he'd make it up to me."

His mouth thinned. "Oh yeah? When he hit a bonanza, he forgot who I was! Another time, working for little, I fought off hijackers at an isolated mine to save my boss' gold. And what did I get for my trouble? A pretty speech, a bullet in my spine that I'll always carry, and my job given to his nitwit nephew!

"Those weren't the only two incidents—there were others—always followed by pretty speeches, even a medal, and always a kick in the pants!"

His eyes glinted like fractured glass, "That, baby, is how little Duke learned that anybody's a sap who sticks his neck

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out for anyone—anyone but himself!"

There was a little silence, and then she said bitterly, "Why add all these frills? Why not admit you're inherently a coward?"

His lips whitened, and his hands clenched into tight knots. "Better smile when you say that, baby. I'm not afraid of anything. I'm just not—"

"Then why," she cut in hotly, "did you add that stipulation that if a hurricane showed itself, your job was considered done?"

"Like I said, I'm all through risking my neck needlessly."

"But you came for a price—a mighty high one."

He spread his hands. "Why not? Philanthropy never got me anything. From here on out I'm getting my cut too!"

Her throat felt hot and dry. "Then I suppose it makes no difference that I'm not, as you assumed, going to use the gold for my own personal gain, but to establish a hospital as a memorial to a man who—who risked his life—always—for others. You wouldn't be willing to eliminate that huge percentage to—to be a part of this memorial?"

He didn't hesitate. His eyes met hers squarely, coldly. "No—I wouldn't. I'll earn my pay. Of that you may be sure. But as for having any interest in your project—no. My only interest is in yours truly!" His eyes still pierced hers.

"I see." She made a weary gesture and rose.

Duke stood up also. In spite of the frustration, the bitterness within her, she was overpoweringly aware of his height, of the breadth of his hard, muscular shoulders.

Jerri turned angrily away—the anger partly toward herself. But Duke put his hands on her shoulders, and drew her back against him. His breath was warm on the nape of her neck as he whispered softly, "Let's not hold grudges on the business end of it, baby. Let's make the most of this whole venture—in off-work hours. Let's—"

With a strangled cry, she wrenched her shoulders from his hands. She marched stiffly to her bedroom door, putting him in his place by not even a word or a backward glance.

But with her hand on the knob, she caught a glimpse of him in the wavy wall mirror. His shoulders were lifted in an indifferent shrug; his smile was smugly amused.

She slammed the door behind her, and then leaned against it, while anger trembled through her. Anger, and something else, something akin to hurt at his indifference. But why should she care that this cocky, arrogant person could take her rebuffs so calmly? Why—when she hated his type—yes, and him!

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CHAPTER TWO

Women Were His Hobby

UNCLE PETE cornered her alone as she was getting breakfast. "How did you come out, honey? Did he agree to cut the percentage?"

She told him the whole of last night's incident—all except that intimate ending. Uncle Pete drew his bushy brows together. "Young fellow's doing a lot of crooked thinking. Got a lot to learn, he has. Still—I like the way he shakes hands."

She had no chance to answer, because Duke, his shirt opened against a bronzed throat, came in at that time.

"Morning, folks," he said heartily.

He helped Jerri set the table. He kidded Uncle Pete. There was no indication from his cheerful attitude that last night had been anything except moonlight and roses.

After breakfast, Uncle Pete rose from the table. "Sure wish I wasn't laid up and could help you at the mine. Getting that gold out soon as possible—" he gave Duke a sidelong glance, "for a mighty worthy cause, is sure important to Jerri."

Duke ignored the barb.

Jerri said, "But, of course, I'm helping."

Duke put down his fork. "No, you're not," he said, and his tone defied argument. "It's my job, and what I'm getting paid for. Besides—" He glanced at her wickedly, and said low, just for her ears, "Besides, I don't like disturbances during working hours—only after—"

Jerri scrubbed furiously at the dishes. How long was she going to have to put up with this?

At noon, she walked across the island and took Duke's lunch to him. She was amazed at the amount of work he had accomplished. He had already sunk a shaft, and had dynamite ready for blasting out the ore.

He ate his lunch quickly and silently, and was back at his job as soon as the last bite was swallowed. He was here to do a job, and he was going to get it done. That much you could say for him, at least.

That night, in order to preclude any amorous advances, Jerri went to her room immediately after supper, feeling a little guilty though about Uncle Pete missing his checker game. Again, she caught Duke's face in the mirror. If she had expected chagrin, she saw none. His face carried a careless, so-what expression. Again, unaccountably, she piqued.

Presently she heard Duke say, "I see you've got a checkerboard here, sir. Like to try your skill against mine?" There was a low chuckle, "Though I warn you, I'm good!"

She listened to the sounds of the friendly game. Her room seemed hot and airless, and she felt a terrible surge of loneliness sweep her. Why? She had never felt that way before. Paul's memory had been company enough.

IN THE DAYS that followed, Duke was as good as his word that he'd come to do a job, and would get it done. He worked from early morning until dusk, blasting, drilling, shoveling, extracting the ore. The blazing sun beat down, and perspiration stuck his clothes tight against his lean, muscular body. But he never complained. He was always cheerful and amiable.

That was the strange thing about Duke. He wasn't bitter about life in general—just one point. A point that had to do with looking out for Duke first.

To show Duke that she wasn't at all interested in his advances, Jerri continued to go to her room each night after supper. That, she argued, should certainly put him in his place!

And yet how could you put a man in his place when he accepted your absence with a shrug, and cheerfully took up a game of checkers as a substitute? It made something hot and aggrieved burn in

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her. It took her to her mirror to scrutinize her face; to ask herself, almost angrily, "What's wrong with me that a game of checkers is just as interesting?"

So, to find out what was wrong with her, and that was the *only* reason, of course, Jerri didn't go to her room tonight after dinner. She said carelessly, "It's so hot. I'm going to take a swim."

She emerged from her room presently in a suit that set off the curves of her slim young body, and walked down toward the beach . . . very slowly. Her heart seemed to be beating unusually hard as she listened for footsteps behind her. But only the lap of the surf broke the silence.

She sat down and waited. Quietly, assuredly as first, then with growing nervousness she picked up a palm frond and braided and unbraided it. Fifteen minutes, a half hour ticked by. He . . . wasn't coming.

BUT HE DID COME. Just as she had given up. She saw him ambling down the beach. He was wearing swim trunks, and the moonlight glistened against his bare, broad shoulders. She leaned against a tree, letting it take the burden of her relief.

But Duke was in no obvious hurry. He stooped to pick up a shell, to examine some soil. He stopped beside her at last, grinning down at her impudently.

"Sorry I kept you waiting so long, baby."

"I wasn't waiting for you!" She said indignantly, but she knew that her perfectly dry bathing suit gave her away.

He lowered himself onto the sand beside her. "Had to have my little game of checkers first."

His utter nonchalance was maddening. "It's obvious checkers are your main interest!" She sank her teeth into her lip. That was certainly giving her chagrin away.

Duke stretched out, his arms under his head, and chuckled. "Oh, I dunno. Maybe I was just letting you bide your time."

Of course! And she had walked right into his trap.

"That's the way with women," Duke was saying. "Some rush in; others don't. You've just got to know your women."

"Which you do, of course?"

"Umm—" he agreed. "Women are my hobby. I collect 'em. Blondes, brunettes, redheads, bad girls, good girls. Wonderful hobby."

She wanted to hurl something mocking at him. Instead, she looked down at her hands, feeling something almost akin to jealousy toward all of his women.

"What's on your mind, honey?" Duke asked, as her silence lengthened.

As if she'd tell him. "I was thinking of—of someone dear and gone."

Duke rolled over on his side. "All wrong. Better take on the living. Now you and I, as I've said, could have a lot of fun."

"And just what would you suggest?"

"Well—" his eyes were wicked. "We could make love."

What she should do was walk away from him indignantly. But she didn't. She went swimming with him in the warm, tropical surf. And then they lay in the sand watching the golden ball of a moon come up. She was aware, overpoweringly aware of him beside her. The warm tropical night, of course, was responsible for this trembling within her. But if he should take her in his arms . . .

BUT HE DIDN'T. Not that night. Nor the next. Nor the several following, as they swam and then lay on the sands. Because she no longer went to her room right after supper. She was, she told herself, merely proving a point by being with Duke. But she didn't quite know what the point was.

She was all confused, and mixed up.

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Why this quickening within her, this hardened beat of her heart when he was near? Why when she abhored his cocky sureness, his me-first philosophy, when he fell so short, so far short of Paul?

And why—dear heaven—this feeling of frustration because he could so calmly take her or leave her alone? Though sometimes she wondered if he were so calm beneath that casual exterior. Sometimes she thought she detected a tenseness, a quickening of his breath, a restrained desire. Why did she catch onto each little sign of feeling so eagerly?

And then she knew.

They were standing beneath a banana tree, and the air was warm, the moon bright and high. And the trembling could not stay housed within Jerri, but quivered outwardly along her shoulders and arms. Maybe Duke saw. Maybe . . .

But his hands were suddenly on her shoulders, turning her to face him, and then his arms were about her, no longer casual, but steel arms, hard and demanding. His lips were pressed to hers with almost fierce intensity.

Emotions, strange new emotions, that Paul had never awakened, burst within her like the sudden erupting of a volcano. With a little sob, she clung to Duke, her fingers clutching his shoulders, her lips returning his ardor. And in that moment she knew, not happily, but with a sort of sick despair, that she loved Duke Barron!

"Did you think I was indifferent to you, baby?" Duke said huskily. "Didn't you know how I've been waiting for this moment?"

His lips trailed across her cheek and she threw everything she had ever believed in to the four winds. What did it matter if he fell far short of her ideal? As long as Duke loved her . . .

But, of course—her heart gave a great upward surge—that was the answer to everything. Because love could change a man's way of thinking. Not overnight, perhaps, but after they were married . . .

"Baby," he pressed his lips to her ear, "I never thought I'd fall this hard."

She let her head drop onto his shoulder. "Nor did I," she admitted unashamedly.

"It'll be wonderful," Duke said, "we'll buy pretties—"

"Oh Duke," she stirred uneasily, "I still want to use the money for—for a hospital."

"Hey—" he shook her a little, "I was talking about what we'd do with *my* money. Your money, baby, that's up to you."

She felt the tears rise to her eyes. You see, already the alchemy of love was changing him, and—

Duke was saying, "Soon as the job's done here—well—what about a couple of weeks in Mexico City?" He tucked a curl behind her ear.

There was no mistaking what he meant. For a moment she felt nothing but stun. And then pain in thick waves washed over her. What a fool she had been to expect anything from Duke Barron but a proposition!

She wrenched from his arms, her breath coming fast. "So you bided your time, thinking you'd catch me in a weak moment, didn't you? Well, I'll never be that weak. Never!"

If she had expected an argument, it didn't come. He looked at her for a long moment, a little sadly, and then he said quietly, "All right, Jerri, if you feel that way. But you can't blame a fellow for trying."

She turned and ran away from him, stumbling a little through her tears. If he had been angry, or put up a fight! But he just didn't care one way or another.

Well, she would never give him another chance to make a fool of her. True, she was stuck here on the island with him, but the paystreak, as he had said,

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was running out. So his job would soon be done, and he'd be gone. In the meantime, she would avoid him as much as possible. She would throw herself into the plans of a memorial for a man who had been worthwhile, and forget a man who wasn't.

Only she couldn't. That was the bitter, heartbreaking part of it. Even when Duke was at the mine, when she was shut in her room at night, she could feel his presence like a powerful magnet drawing her against her rebellious soul.

BUT HER PRESENCE obviously didn't pull at Duke's soul. He was just as cheerful, as casual as ever. Or—was he? Did he accept her going to her room at night with quite his former indifference? Was there sometimes a little puzzled look in his eyes as they rested on her?

She put those thoughts from her as erroneous. After all, she had imagined some reactions before, and then discovered they didn't exist. Except in relation to a casual proposition.

Jerri picked at her food. Her cheeks began to thin. Uncle Pete watched her, his bushy brows drawn together.

"Jerri—" he said one day, taking her hands. "Jerri, are you in love with this Duke person?"

"Don't be a fool, Uncle Pete!" But her cheeks colored.

"Funny thing about that young pup," Uncle Pete said thoughtfully, "lots of things I like about him—his good nature, his ability to work, his kindness to an old man. But he's got a lot of wrong ideas. Like his cocksureness, his me-first attitude, his ideas about women."

He looked at Jerri on the last and she felt the color burning her neck, wondering how much he knew—or guessed.

"I dunno why." Uncle Pete shook his shaggy head, puzzled. "But I got a feeling that all his wrong thinking lies nearer the surface than even Duke suspects. That a good jolt would bounce it plumb off!"

"You're wrong," Jerri said thickly, "all wrong, Uncle Pete. And I think you'll find I'm right."

She had a queer premonition that her words would come true.

CHAPTER THREE

Haven for Two Hearts

THEY DID NOT take the gold to the mainland as they mined it, to bank. It was important that no word of their discovery leak out. Unprotected as they were, and with no means of communication to the mainland, they were too vulnerable to the unscrupulous. So the precious gold for Jerri's project was kept in a small cabinet in the house. Since

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no one knew of its existence, it was as safe there as any place. And no one ever came to the island.

But one day—just the day—in fact, that Duke announced the paystreak had run out; that all the gold they would extract was in the cabinet, someone did come to the island.

Jerri was standing on the beach when she saw the launch nearing the island. It did not seem to be coming under its own power, but was drifting with the tide toward their beach.

She ran and told Uncle Pete and Duke. By the time they got back, the launch was bobbing in the shallow water, and two men were wading ashore, their hands grasping the tow rope from the bow of the boat.

Jerri didn't like their looks. One was an American, obviously, short and pudgy, with heavy jowls and thick lips. The other, a Mexican, was thin and dark with small, beady eyes.

When they spotted the three on the pier, the pudgy man threw the rope up on the landing.

"Here," he panted, "make it fast!"

Duke caught the rope, and twisted it around a pillar. But his eyes going over the man narrowed a little. As they scrambled up the ladder, Duke stood solidly in front of them, as if to block their progress.

"In trouble?" he asked.

They shot each other quick looks. "Oh you mean the boat? Si." It was the Mexican speaking.

"Well, if it's engine trouble, I can fix that in a jiff," Duke said quickly. "You can get back to the mainland before dark."

"No engine trouble."

"But you were drifting."

"Well, it's like this, bud," the American said, "our pilot had a little accident. He—er—fell overboard and got drowned. Pedro, here, and I don't know how to skipper this craft." His voice was casual.

Duke frowned. "In that case, I'll pilot it back for you. The young lady can follow in her own launch to bring me back."

Again the two men looked swiftly at each other, seeming to come to some silent agreement.

"No, bud," the American said. "I think we're going to stay here for a spell. You see, we don't want to get questioned about that drowning, and this is a mighty nice little hideout!"

"Listen—" Duke began.

"I say we stay!" The Mexican whipped out a revolver and moved it across the vision of the three on the pier.

JERRI'S HEART froze in her chest. Once these men stepped on the island, it meant trouble. The Mexican was already part way up the ladder. Her eyes darted wildly to Duke. Standing where he was, he *could* take a chance of kicking the gun from the man's hand. Duke must have seen the chance too, because his foot moved forward a little . . . and then stopped.

The men scrambled onto the pier. Jerri stifled a sob in her throat. Their chance was lost. And because Duke would not take a risk that involved himself!

Uncle Pete's eyes on Duke carried high scathing; Jerri's, hurt. If Duke saw or cared, he gave no evidence, except, perhaps, a muscle moving near his mouth.

Walking up to the house, Jerri was cold with terror. She could figure out the so-called accidental drowning of their other companion. They had killed him—blood stains on their shirt were testimony—perhaps in a quick, angry argument, before they thought about his being the only one able to handle the boat, and had dropped his body overboard. These men were thugs of the most dangerous type. They would find her gold and take

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away all she had lived and worked for. And Duke would let them!

She looked down at her trembling hands, and knew, sickly, that the hurt of the latter was more sharp and penetrating even than the loss of the gold.

In the house, the American said to Jerri, "How about some grub, sister?" and pinched her arm.

Uncle Pete whirled on Duke, eyes blazing, his voice low and gritted, just for him, "I'm an old man, but you—are you going to stand for that?"

Duke's eyes moved slowly to the pistol lying on the table. It was near his reach —and the Mexican's. One or the other *could* get it first.

The muscles tightened along Duke's jaw, and Jerri thought, on a sudden, wild heartbeat; *This time he is going to do something!*

And then abruptly Duke turned and walked to the window. "I came here to do a job," he said flatly, "not to put my neck in a sling."

Jerri closed her eyes and swayed a little against the bitter hurt and pain. Dear God, why did she keep hoping?

After dinner, the American said, licking his lips, "Pedro, give me that pistol, then you go down and bust up the motor of the girl's launch. And see that ours is locked up. Don't want these folks to get any ideas about skipping to the mainland for the law. And Pedro—" As the Mexican rose, "just to make sure there's no booby traps, take a look around the island."

"But there's nothing but banana trees," Jerri cried, rising from her chair. "Nothing, I tell you!"

The American pushed her back, his eyes narrowing. "Then what you so fussed about? Do as I say, Pedro."

Jerri leaned weakly against the back of her chair. Uncle Pete cursed roundly under his breath. There was no sound from Duke.

Presently, the crash of steel on steel, as the motor was broken apart, came to their ears. And then the moments, the heartbreaking moments, ticked slowly by.

And then, just as she had known it would happen, Pedro came rushing in, wild-eyed, excited. "A mine, boss. I found where they been gold mining!"

"Well! Well!" The American sucked in his lips. "Now where you got that gold hidden, folks?"

No one answered. But the gold was so easy, so heartbreakingly easy to find. Right there in the little cabinet.

She watched the men run their greedy fingers through it, and she closed her eyes against the sickness within her. She could feel Duke looking at her, but she did not open her eyes to the pain of what his look would be saying: *I'm sorry, baby. But I'm not risking my neck!*

TWO DAYS went by. The men took possession of the gold. They gave orders, and they gave insults. How long would this go on?

She rarely ever spoke to Duke. She even ceased casting him bitter looks.

But once she said, "Part of it is your gold. I should think you'd be interested in that, at least!"

He shrugged. "What good is it to me if I'm pushing up daisies? I can always find more, some place, to buy me fun, and champagne, and—"

"Sure! Sure! But where will I find more for my hospital, the thing I worked and dreamed toward? The—the—" Unbidden tears came to her eyes. She choked hard, and could not go on.

His eyes were on her face, and in them she saw something akin to struggle. Then he seemed to push the struggle, or whatever it was, aside. Was it with an effort, or did she think so only because she wanted to?

When he spoke she knew it was the

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latter. "I got the gold out of the ground for you," he said flatly, "that's all I contracted for."

It was the morning of the third day that the weather began to change. Yellow clouds boiled up in the sky, and the sun glowed through them sullen and red. Quick thunderstorms came up, and then a high, nervous wind began to blow.

"Hurricane weather," Uncle Pete said drily.

"Listen," the American said, "we ain't ready to leave yet. So don't try fooling us to get us to scram."

But Uncle Pete wasn't fooling. By dusk, giant waves were rolling up onto the beach. The wind throughout the night increased its crescendo. By morning it was a screeching demon.

They were all in the house. Jerri, and Duke, and Uncle Pete were still, and white-faced. The two intruders paced the floor.

"How bad does this get, old man?" the American asked, wiping the perspiration from his face with a shaky hand.

Uncle Pete shrugged. "It could blow itself out—or it could blow us out. I think—"

His words were drowned out as the walls vibrated violently, and a window crashed in and splintered.

The American made up his mind. "We're heading for the mainland," he said white-lipped. "Get the gold, Pedro."

Jerri rose. At least—she thought—at least we'll stand a chance of saving our lives.

But the American pushed her back into the chair. "Not you or the old man, sister," he said. "The launch ain't big enough." He jerked his head toward Duke. "We take you to pilot the boat."

There was a white rim around Duke's mouth. He opened his lips and took a step forward. And then his eyes went to the pistol in the Mexican's hand. Without a word, without a look at Jerri or Uncle Pete, he walked ahead of the two men out the door.

Jerri stared, dry-eyed, at the closed door. She felt neither fright nor panic. Her whole body seemed to be encased in a cake of ice that numbed all feeling, all emotion.

She stood there for a long moment, then she walked stiffly over to the window. The launch was leaving the pier, beginning its battle with the waves. At the helm was a tall, straight figure with cropped blond hair.

"It—it was in his contract to leave if a hurricane showed up," she said stupidly.

Uncle Pete swore roundly. "And I thought, right up to now, that he'd come through!"

"So did I," Jerri admitted. *Up until now.* She turned her back on the window. There was nothing to do except wait on the whim of the hurricane.

The wind whipped itself into a whirling, screeching dervish. But Jerri was oblivious to it. She stared hypnotically at the clock as it ticked slowly on and on. A tree crashed in a part of the roof, and she gave a long, shuddering sob. But it was not for herself.

She was thinking: If he made it against the waves, he should be on the mainland now—safe. She dropped her head into her hands and prayed. "Please, dear God, let him be safe!"

Uncle Pete cursed as the walls shook, splintering more glass. He got up, and limped over to the window. And then, through the howl of the storm, she heard him cry out.

SHE JUMPED UP, her eyes following his. Battling its way through the giant waves, and back toward the island, was the gangster's launch!

"I got a hunch," Uncle Pete said hoarsely, "that Duke needs help!"

They were outside, bent far over against the wind, clinging to trees for support.

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And then they were at the pier, and not a moment too soon.

Vaguely, she was aware of two men lying prone on the deck. But her eyes were only for the man at the helm. His shirt was covered with blood, and one arm hung limp at his side.

Panting, and with a tremendous effort, he tossed the rope up to them. He dragged himself up the ladder, making the last two steps only with their help.

"Wind's blowing out toward the coast—" His words were thick, labored. "You can make it if—if you carry a light load. Just the two of you."

He reached inside his shirt and drew out a leather sack. "The gold, baby. All of it. My share too. For—for your hospital." He grinned at her with his old, cocky impudence, "Just buy one bottle of champagne, honey, and when you—"

But he never finished. He slid quietly to the pier.

With a cry, Jerri sank down beside him, cradling his head in her arms, sobbing his name over and over.

"Dad burn it," Uncle Pete croaked hoarsely. "I knew he'd come through!"

OF THE REST, she was never afterward too sure. How she managed, with the weight of five people—three of them ripped with bullets and possibly dying—through the angry, swollen seas.

For two days, Jerri paced the corridor of the coastal town's little hospital, without sleep, without rest, while Duke's life hung in the balance. And then they gave her the news. He would live.

She went into his room. His eyes were closed. He was very white. And still.

She sank down onto the bed. "Duke, why did you do it?" Her voice shook. "Why did you risk your life against those thugs? Why did you come back—straight into the teeth of that hurricane?"

He opened his eyes. "Oh, just for the hell of it, baby!" But his voice missed out on his old cockiness.

"Duke Barron," her eyes flashed, "you tell me the truth!"

"All right," he said grimly, "I love you, Jerri."

She gave a small, happy sob. "Oh Duke, I love you too—"

There was a look of humbleness and pleading in his eyes. "We could go to Mexico City for our honeymoon," he said. "That is—" he was suddenly awkward, unsure, "if you'll have me, Jerri."

"But I didn't know you cared that way," she whispered.

He shook his head. "I didn't even know it myself. I thought you were just another girl that I could take or leave alone. I was so cocky, so sure of myself—" His mouth twisted. "So interested only in my own neck. But when I stepped into the boat with those two thugs I suddenly knew the truth. I knew that nothing mattered except—except—"

He seemed to be struggling for words, words that he could not get out. He gave up at last and said, "Well, I watched my chance. But they were looking for something too. It was a nasty brawl. Did—did I kill them?"

"No, darling. The law will take care of them."

She let her finger trail down the curve of his lean, hard jaw. "You know, I think maybe I ought to dedicate that hospital to you!"

He raised up on one elbow, his eyes flashing. "You'll do nothing of the sort. You'll dedicate it to a man who was worthy of it. Me—I'm just a punk—who thinks of his own neck first!"

She leaned down, and laid her lips on his. He caught her to him, tightly, hungrily, as if he would never let her go. And the rough-walled hospital room, in a tiny seaport town of Yucatan, was suddenly a small corner of Paradise.

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A Small Slice Of Glamor

By MARGERY WOODS

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When Kay accepted it she didn't know that a big piece of heartbreak was the forfeit.

IT ALL HAPPENED because Kay Prynne went to a cocktail party on San Francisco's Nob Hill. Or perhaps it really happened because several days before the party Kay lunched with Alice Wayne, an old high school friend, who'd married pots of money.

Alice wore an imported suit with sables. Kay wore a three-year-old suit with a scarf. And during the conversation Kay was invited to the cocktail party.

"Make Edgar come," Alice said. "I haven't seen him for ages."

Kay was engaged to Edgar and knew he'd rather be shot than mingle with what he called "Alice's snooty crowd."

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But then and there, party or not, she decided to buy a new dress.

Edgar was taking her to Oakland on Saturday to meet his Aunt Gussie, the rich aunt, which made a good excuse for something new, though, heaven knows, Kay needed no excuse. In the end she recklessly acquired the most exciting dress she'd ever owned, and way beyond her budget even if it *was* on sale.

The violet silk turned her eyes to the same hue. The bodice was nicely fitted to Kay's very nice curves, the skirt extravagant in unpressed pleats. In a final burst of extravagance she topped off her shopping spree with a tiny chartreuse hat and matching gloves.

I owe it to myself, she thought, dressing for the call on Aunt Gussie. *And to Edgar. He doesn't even notice what I wear nowadays. But he'll have to notice this.*

Edgar was ruddy-cheeked with sleeked-down blond hair and heavy blond eyebrows. "New dress?" he said. "Looks expensive."

"It was on sale," Kay answered, feeling letdown.

"Um-m-m. New hat too."

"Like it?" she asked, ruffling the dark curls, which sprayed charmingly below the scrap of chartreuse.

"Well—yes. It's kind of cute. But maybe you'd better not wear that outfit today. Aunt Gussie is the thrifty type and I wouldn't want her to think you were extravagant. This call on her is important, Kay. I might wangle the old gal into helping us with the house, and then we could get married sooner—next fall maybe."

That darn house! He talked of nothing else. Not that she didn't want one herself, but that they'd gone on for years with nothing but talk. So Kay lost her temper. Kay said she'd go as she was or not at all. And they drove to Oakland, not speaking.

Though tea with Aunt Gussie went off pretty well, Edgar was still grumpy on the trip home. Just to needle him Kay mentioned the cocktail party.

"It's today, Edgar, from five o'clock on. We could drop by for just a little while."

"Now, Kay," he said, "you know I hate these snooty affairs. If you go, it'll be by yourself."

"Okay," she snapped. "Maybe I will go." And she did.

ALICE'S PENTHOUSE was lavish in picture windows and elegant furniture. Her friends were glittery people, who nibbled *hors d'eouvres,* took cocktails from passing trays and talked like mad. Kay didn't fit in one little bit. *I had no business coming,* she thought, pushed into a lonely niche against lime draperies, while she tried to avoid the narrowed, appraising glances of a young man across the room.

He was a handsome fellow at that, and patently bored by the little blonde who was looking at him as if he'd just dropped out of heaven. *Man-about-town if I ever saw one,* Kay thought. And when he smiled, an engaging, crooked grin, she decided to go—quietly. She had found her short white coat and was edging toward Alice's gilt head to make her *adeiux* when here he was—that same man.

"You leaving too?" he asked. "I don't blame you. It's a foul party."

"Not at all," Kay answered stiffly. "I think it's all very nice." And discovered that his hair was a ruddy brown, his eyes very blue, and that his hand, now laid on her arm, was sending shivers up her spine.

"Come along," he said brusquely. "I'll drop you wherever it is."

"B-but I must tell Alice good-bye."

"She'll never know. The gal's as high as the stratosphere. Come on."

To her dismay Kay found herself in the elevator, where he told her his name was Jock Hayden. Then they were in his

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car—a new, medium-priced deal. She gave him her address, and didn't notice that he'd turned the wrong way until suddenly they were on the approach to the Golden Gate bridge.

"We'll drive around first," Jock Hayden said when she protested. "Breathe it, my duck. Smell it. This is fresh air."

"That penthouse *was* stifling," Kay admitted. And a hard core of dissatisfaction seemed to give way, leaving her relaxed, free, adventurous—and with all that a little scared.

"Are you and Alice old friends?" she asked, anxious to be reassured.

"Never met her," he answered, "until tonight. My boss and his wife were going to that party and dragged me along. Why I let them I wouldn't know. Unless it was to meet you," he added with an impudent sidewise grin.

This was awful. He didn't even know Alice—had crashed the party, really. "I must go home," Kay said. "I have a date."

"Skip it, violet eyes. This is fun. Confidentially, I don't eat little girls, and to prove it I'll drop by my sister, Helen's. She lives in San Rafael, has two children, a nice husband. My relatives are beyond reproach. You'll see."

Kay should go back, wanted to go on. Jock Hayden was so exciting, so different. "Violet eyes," he had called her. Were her eyes really violet? *Edgar* wouldn't know.

"Engaged?" Jock asked, spotting Kay's modest diamond as she removed the chartreuse gloves.

"Uh-huh."

"How long?"

"Four years."

"Too long. Going to be married soon?"

"Well, not so very. You see, Edgar—I mean, *we*—want our own home first. And that costs so much nowadays."

"Nuts! It isn't the gable on the roof that makes a marriage. If I lost my head, really wanted some gal, I'd just carry her over the threshold of my two-by-twice apartment, and that would be that."

"But security," she said, quoting Edgar, "is so important nowadays."

Her heart was thumping though and, just as plain, she saw Jock carry a girl into that "two-by-twice" apartment, both of them eager, crazy in love. Carrying a girl? Oh my goodness! The girl was herself.

"You're blushing," Jock said. "I like it."

Kay turned scarlet. Of all the idiotic daydreams. She'd better get away from this fellow.

Presently they were winding through oak-clad hills to stop at a ranch-type house with a two-car garage. Below them the lights of San Rafael winked through the twilight, and from the door a tall girl cried:

"Oh! It's you, Jock. How wonderful."

JOCK'S SISTER, Helen Granger, was not only tall like himself but had the same ruddy brown hair. Her husband, Don, was charming and the two little girls looked like twins, though one was older by fifteen months.

Over a highball in the beamed living room Helen smiled warmly at Kay. "I want you and Jock for dinner," she said. "Let me know when."

"You made a hit," Jock said as they drove away. "Sis doesn't generally ask my gals to dinner."

The glow of the highball chilled. His girls . . . a galaxy of them, no doubt—smart, sophisticated creatures like the ones at Alice's party.

"Oh no!" Kay exclaimed, as he pulled up at a swank-looking roadhouse, "I must go home."

"Not *hungry*! I always feed my wenches. Come on."

She came. Something drastic had happened to what she laughingly called her "will power." They had lobster thermidor

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in the ruddy glow of a huge fireplace, danced on a pint-sized floor.

Lighting Kay's cigarette, Jock said, "You remind me of someone—a girl I was crazy about way back when. How long have you known Edgar?"

"We were in high school together."

"Don't tell me he's the only beau you've ever had."

"Well—more or less." He was, really, unless you'd count the silliness of junior high crushes.

"That's awful!" Jock exclaimed. "Don't you ever wish you'd dated hit or miss before you got so settled? Don't you ever wonder if he is the one, really?"

"Of course not," Kay bluffed, though sometimes she did have such thoughts.

"What you need," he decided, "is a small slice of glamor. And why not? Look! Suppose I give you a whirl for a couple of weeks. It'll be fun and you might even get a new slant on Edgar. I mean, you'll know then—for sure."

"That's ridiculous. I know right now. And besides—what's in it for you?"

"Call it a whim. I like you, violet eyes. You're pretty, you know. And there's something about the way your nose crinkles when you laugh. Ah—a rumba! Let's go."

"But I don't rumba."

"Time you did then. It's easy, and you've got dancing feet."

The rumba *was* easy. Did she really have dancing feet? Kay wondered, feeling as light in Jock's arms as a puff of wind. She and Edgar seldom danced, because it was too expensive. Jock complained that the floor was crowded. So they left only to dance on a larger one in San Francisco.

It was after one o'clock when he finally delivered Kay to the big old house on Clay street, which had been made over into one-room-and-kitchenette apartments.

"I'll be seeing you," he said in the small downstairs hall that seemed to gather cooking odors and hold them. "How about Wednesday around seven-thirty?"

"I couldn't. Edgar always—"

"Thursday then. White tie stuff. I'll make a reservation."

She said that was out of the question and primly thanked him for a lovely evening. But he laughed off her protests and ruffled the curls below the tiny hat. Thursday, he insisted. If she let him down, he'd have her hide.

THAT NIGHT Kay dreamed of dancing and dancing, as light as air. *Violet eyes,* Jock said, and his arms were strong about her.

But the next morning, luxurious in her bed, as it was Sunday, she told herself that Jock's "slice of glamor" idea was pure nonsense and that he would probably forget all about it by Thursday. Anyway, she wouldn't go out with him. She couldn't, in fact, when her only formal was a beat-up old thing left over from high school dances.

However, on Wednesday Jock phoned right after she got home from the office. Kay worked in a stenographic pool at an investment house on Montgomery Street.

He'd called, he said, to remind her about tomorrow night and paid no attention to her insistence that they'd better just drop the whole thing. Stubborn, was he? Well, two could play at that game. He'd find her waiting—in a pair of blue jeans. And that would settle Jock Hayden!

Wednesday was Edgar's night to come to dinner. He liked routine. Tonight he was in a good mood as he'd seen Aunt Gussie again and sounded her out on helping him, and she had shown some encouragement. When the dishes had been cleared from the card table where they ate, he got out a magazine he'd brought along. If Aunt Gussie came through, he said, they might buy a lot and build to

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their liking. And here in the magazine's Small Homes Section was just the place he had in mind . . .

"Kay!" Edgar accused. "You're not listening."

"I was just thinking, Edgar. Why must we have our own home right now? Why couldn't we just get married and live for a while in this—this two-by-twice apartment? Then later—"

"Now, Kay. It's all working out beautifully. By next fall I'll be able to swing this, with Aunt Gussie's help. And you should have enough put by for the furniture. Uh—how much in your savings account up to date?"

"Quite a bit!" she snapped, furious at the way she'd been brushed off. *But tomorrow night,* her mind added, *I'll have less because I'm buying a formal, you nitwit.*

Forever and ever Kay had wanted a bare-shouldered formal. And the one she bought, ankle-length black net, was perfect. She did feel selfish, spending so much for it, but promised herself to wear it this once, then save it for her honeymoon. Sternly she refused to wonder where you would wear such elegance on a honeymoon with Edgar.

As she dressed her hands were very cold, and her cheeks burned. What would happen tonight? Was Jock the fresh type? She suspected that he was. Her hair, fastened with sparkling combs, sprayed darkly against the nape of her neck and for once her bangs had decided to behave. She gazed at herself, enchanted, admiring the sweet curve of her bare shoulders, the shining eyes under dark-winged brows, the wide cheek bones and soft, eager mouth.

JOCK ARRIVED with a yellow orchid and a long, admiring whistle. He took her to the Fairmount Hotel, where they had scrumptious food, danced to heavenly music. *Is this real, Kay? Pinch yourself.*

A rail-thin young chap and a strawberry blonde swept down on their table. "Jock, my sweet!" the blonde cried. "It's been ages."

Kay danced with the man and Jock with the blonde. From the two Kay gathered bits of information about her escort.

"Are you from Fresno?" she asked Jock when they were finally alone.

"Yup. Helen and I were born there. Dad works for a department store—Frane and Gibson."

"And you're a lawyer?"

"A very new one," he admitted wryly. "I'm with Bluett, Gordon and Bluett. They talk of a partnership someday. Probably about the time I get a long gray beard from worrying over my debts."

She was shocked. From his lavish ways she'd assumed that he must have either a wonderful job or a rich father. But apparently he had neither. When the waiter

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brought their check, she stared shamelessly.

"Jock Hayden. What an outrageous sum to pay for one evening's entertainment. How can you afford—I mean, you should save your money."

"What for?" he asked, laughing.

From the Fairmount they drove to the beach and parked in the moonlight. "You did make a hit with Helen," Jock said. "They're all spending the weekend at the Russian River and want us to come along."

"I couldn't possibly. Edgar—"

"Then we'll drive up Saturday and back that evening. You have Saturdays off, don't you, violet eyes?"

"Yes-s. And Edgar generally works. But—"

That settled it, he said and slid his arm around her. She wiggled but he held her close, then turned her mouth to his and very deliberately kissed her.

Kay pulled away, trembling. "You shouldn't, Jock."

"That's part of the experiment, silly. How do you know you like Edgar's kisses best if you've never been kissed by anyone else?"

She was angry with him and tingling all over and hot with shame for feeling this way. Must he kiss so—so thoroughly? He was experienced, she thought bitterly; too darned experienced.

FOR SATURDAY Kay bought slacks, a long-sleeved blouse and a scarlet swim suit. You couldn't go out with Jock looking like a displaced person. At the Russian River the May sun was heavenly warm. The low, shingled house with its capacious sleeping porches belonged to his mother and father, Jock explained. He and Helen had learned to swim off that very dock.

Kay liked to think of Jock as a little boy diving off the dock. As a man, he was too magnetic and disturbing.

The Grangers were charming, the water icy. In the afternoon the men and children swam again but the girls played sissy by sun-bathing on the dock.

"I hope you two are serious," Helen remarked suddenly.

"Oh, no!" Kay exclaimed, hot-cheeked. "We're just friends."

"Never mind," Helen laughed. "I can still dream. You see, it's like this with Jock. He has never gone overboard but once—for a French girl when he was overseas. He did his Army stint after the war, and she was an interpreter. He wrote us about her but when he came home, said she was marrying someone else. Then after three years they began to correspond. I think she started it. And now I'm so afraid he may send for her. She may be okay, but you never know."

Kay felt as if a chill wind were blowing through her. *You remind me of someone,* Jock had said. The same girl of course. And if he did send for her? Well, what if he did? This was only a whim, an experiment.

But a small cloud drifting over the sun seemed to mar the day's happiness.

Kay got home later than she had planned to find Edgar waiting for her.

"Where have you been?" he demanded.

"To the Russian River—with a girl from the office. It was fun."

"New slacks?" he asked sourly.

"And a new swim suit. Should I have asked your permission?"

He scowled and told her to change. They had dinner in a counter restaurant, then went to a movie. It was their regular Saturday night program. In the movie Edgar held Kay's hand, all nice and cozy. Though she remembered with guilty excitement that most of the way home *Jock* had held her hand . . . under his on the wheel.

That night Edgar's kisses seemed flat, like vanilla ice cream minus the vanilla. And all Jock's fault, Kay thought. She'd

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better be done with this silly little *whim.*

But instead Kay danced with Jock, in the violet dress or the new formal. They saw a revival of *Oklahoma,* dined in small restaurants where the food was superb and the waiters called Jock "Mr. Hayden." She kept reminding herself that he was extravagant and philandering, kept telling herself that he'd leave her flat one of these days unless she left him first. But when the phone rang she would fly for it, heart pounding. And dressing for a date with him, she would shine like a neon light.

FROM A SENSE of guilt, Kay had never given herself fully to Jock's kisses, and sometimes she fended them off altogether. But one night in the dingy little downstairs hall such headlong awareness leaped between them that Edgar was forgotten, everything forgotten save Jock's arms and his mouth on hers. It was as sweet as heaven, as turbulent as a stormy sea. When she finally drew away from him, even the ugly hall seemed glorified.

"You're a great girl, violet eyes," he said huskily, kissing her again, quick and hard.

She was ashamed, but there was no shame in her dreams, only a tumultuous sense of giving.

However the next day she faced the issue squarely. *You're letting yourself fall for Jock, and that's no good. So only one more date, my girl. This time, I mean it.*

As it turned out, the date was a foursome at Jock's apartment, the object being to prove to Helen and Don that he could cook, which they doubted.

He prepared baked potatoes with cheese sauce, garlicked a huge steak and had Kay come early to whip up a salad. The apartment consisted of one comfortably furnished room, and what Jock called a one-man kitchen. It *was* cozy for two, Kay and Jock bumping into each other as he mixed Martinis and she tossed the salad.

He was so big; so disturbing. And this was their last date. She must go through with it. Just being so near him right now had her all upset and trembling. But sorrow lay heavy within her. No more Jock, ever again . . .

The dinner was a huge success, and later they played records. The room was large, big enough for two, Kay thought wistfully. Helen smiled at her warmly. Jock dropped on the arm of her chair and ruffled her dark curls. She could have died with longing.

Then suddenly, just as plain, she was in Jock's arms being carried into this "two-by-twice" apartment. *I love him,* she thought. *And maybe . . . just maybe . . . he loves me.*

Suddenly nothing mattered but to be with him; to hope for his love, pray for it.

The doorbell was ringing and Jock answered it, exclaiming, *"Paulette!"*

Beyond him Kay glimpsed a girl, very slender with raven hair.

"Jockie!" the girl cried. "My love," and flung herself into his arms.

Helen had turned very pale, and Don muttered, "Damn!" under his breath.

The French girl, Kay thought, numb with disbelief. Jock *had* sent for her.

But Paulette's next words proved that he had not: "The surprise, eh?" she asked, gazing fondly at him. "You look wonder-r-ful, my darling. So big, so sweet."

Then she noticed the stricken three in the livingroom. "But it is your sister," she cried. "I recognize from the picture. You see, I remember *everything.*"

Darting across the room, she kissed the amazed Helen.

Kay realized vaguely that she was being introduced, that highballs were being mixed. *It's Fate,* she thought as they drank. *Jock is not for me.*

The French girl babbled that she had got her visa through an uncle who lived in Chicago; that she had planned for months *this beautiful surprise.*

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At last Kay was out of that horrible apartment; Helen and Don driving her home.

"The little fiend!" Helen raged. "Jock didn't seem about to send for her, so she came anyway. Now here she is, alone in a strange country, and he's stuck with her. No. I won't have it. Kay, we must do something."

"He loves her," Kay said in a small, lost voice.

"Nonsense. If he did, he'd have brought her over long ago. But she might hook him, at that. For all his man-about-town pose Jock is a soft-hearted guy. Kay, if you—"

"I'm out of this," Kay interrupted. "I—I'm going to marry someone else—a man I've known for years and years."

IN BED Kay cried desperately, then lay exhausted, unable to sleep. It was Fate, she kept telling herself. But how to live without Jock? Would he telephone? Her spirits rose just a little.

But he didn't telephone and the days dragged by. Kay made mistakes at the office and forgot to eat. Even Edgar noticed and said she didn't look so good.

She had decided that marrying Edgar now would be a farce, but she was too numb to do anything about the decision.

One evening Helen phoned. She'd had lunch, she said, with Paulette that day, and the girl had talked as if marrying Jock was in the bag.

"But is that her idea?" Helen asked. "Or his? Oh, Kay, please do something."

"I'm out of this," Kay answered miserably.

It was Saturday and Kay was dressing for the inevitable blueplate dinner with Edgar, and the inevitable movie. Listlessly she zipped her old black taffeta. The violet dress didn't belong to dates with Edgar. He's early, she thought when the doorbell rang. And the next moment was looking at Jock—a strange Jock, tired and serious, strained, his hair wind-ruffled.

"May I come in?" he asked.

She stood aside, wordless, her eyes running over his rugged jaw line, his broad shoulders and narrow waist. Emotion clawed at her; anger for Paulette, fierce longing, sorrow . . . and a wee bit of hope.

"I wanted to explain about Paulette," he said.

"I think I understand," Kay answered, trying to play it light and careless. "This is the happy ending, isn't it? The old love come back . . . and all that sore of thing."

"The old love, yes—four years ago. But she didn't want me then, and I thought that was that. Then she began to write, and now she's here. But I don't know, Kay. How's Edgar?"

"Fine. Just fine. He's taking me to dinner this evening."

"We had fun," he said. "I miss it. Do you?"

"Of course. I loved it. I—" She paused drowned in his blue gaze.

Do something. Helen had said. And now Kay had the impulse to fly for Jock's arms, but the bell rang again.

"Edgar!" she exclaimed.

"Should I hide in a closet?" Jock asked wryly.

For answer she flung open the door. Edgar started to kiss her, stopped and stared in amazement at Jock. Mechanically Kay introduced them. It was like a bad play, she thought, as they shook hands, Edgar scowling and Jock appraising him, eyes thoughtfully narrowed. There was silence, awkward silence, and Jock looked at Kay challengingly as if it was *her* turn now. But the whole thing seemed unreal, as if this were really a play, and she the audience.

"Well," Jock said at last, "I'll run along. Happy dining, you two."

"Who is that fellow?" Edgar demanded.

"Just a—friend."

"Then why haven't I heard about him?

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Wait! Have you been out with the guy?"

Kay nodded her head, numb, not caring. So she'd been two-timing him, Edgar raged. No wonder she was never home when he called. And after the way he'd worked for her—.

With that the numbness fell away. "You worked," Kay corrected, "for a two-bedroom house, not me."

"Your house."

"No. *Yours,* right down to the plumbing. You want domesticity, Edgar, and possessions. But you're not in love with me. Why, you've never even kissed me . . . really."

THIS OUTRAGEOUS statement was the end. Edgar blew his top completely, then left with the ring in his pocket. Kay collapsed into a chair. She felt relieved, yet sad. Poor Edgar! He was a nice guy in his own stodgy way. And Jock . . . Was he gone for good too? Loneliness clutched at her. In the silent room she could practically hear her own heartbeats.

She remembered how he had looked at her, waiting. *But what could I have said?* she asked herself. *Oh, Jock! If you'd only have said you loved me, just once.* Still, he had come tonight. And Edgar had interrupted at the wrong moment.

Kay . . . Helen seemed to say. Do something.

"I will," Kay said aloud and sprang up. She started for the telephone, but stopped and began to unzip the black dress. Then into the violet one and the chartreuse hat. *Paulette hasn't got him yet.*

Outside she found fog . . . and no taxi. Never mind, only a few blocks to Jock's apartment house. The fog tangled in her bangs and the fluff of curls below her hat. She walked breathlessly, as if she were racing against time. But across the street from Jock's apartment her courage weakened. What would she say when he opened the door. Did he want her really?

A cab had stopped in front of the house. It slid away to reveal a girl with a brown paper bag under one arm, hurrying toward the door. *Paulette.* You'd know that hat and black French-looking suit anywhere.

Logically, this final catastrophe should have sent Kay home defeated. Instead that compact little figure, disappearing so familiarly into Jock's apartment house, roused her to illogical anger. Without thought she darted across the street, a motorist yelling at her and squeaking his brakes.

In the lobby Paulette had disappeared. Kay jabbed the elevator button. *That Paulette;* throwing herself at Jock; playing on his sympathies; stuffing him with toothsome French dishes! Rage carried Kay upstairs, though panic hit her as she rang Jock's bell.

"Kay!" he exclaimed. "Come in." His blue eyes were warm, questioning.

She came, trembling, reaching for words when she wanted only his arms and lips.

"Jockie," Paulette called from the kitchen. "I could not find the French bread. If there is some little shop around —Oh!"

The First Time

by S. H. Dewhurst

My heart was never one to be
Afraid of facing destiny;
Accepting the Present in its stride,
It was always willing to abide
By what the Future held in store . . .
Then you arrived. With little more
Than a gentle smile, a soft "Hello,"
You took my every dream in tow—
And my heart was frightened, there and then,
That it might not see you again.

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And she was in the kitchen door, her jacket removed, a frilly apron tied round her waist. "So we have the guest—" she said. "The Miss—What is the name? I forget."

"Prynne," Jock supplied.

"Oh yes. Hel-lo, Miss Prynne. I am cooking dinner for Jock. He loves it so—the French cooking, I mean."

Kay's panic fled, and she looked straight into Paulette's hard, dark eyes. "I love it too," she said. "Please include me in."

"Include you in. I do not understand. But if you mean— Well, I have planned for two and—"

Kay crinkled her nose at Jock. "You'll split your portions with me. Won't you . . . *darling?*"

"Sure, violet eyes. Love to." And he laughed outright.

"She is making the monkey of me," Paulette cried furiously. "I will not have it, Jock. She was not invited here."

"Were *you* invited?" he asked, chuckling.

"That is different. I love you. I plan the surprise, the dinner *à deux*. And she spoils it. But not for love. That first night I have what you call 'her number.' She is the shrewd one, the—the *gold-digger.*"

"Gold-digger!" Jock shouted. "So that's it. You brushed off Jock, the poor GI, but found out later—heaven knows how. So you wrote to me. And what a fool I was! Swallowing all that stuff about how you discovered, too late, that you loved me. How you missed me more every day; cried into your pillow at night."

"No, Jockie. I did not find out anything. I—"

He flung her jacket and hat at her. "Get out!" he ordered. "And stay out."

As Paulette scuttled through the door Jock laughed again.

"You were superb," he told Kay. "You see, I was pretty mixed up with pitying Paulette, and—well, wondering why you hung to Edgar when I was darned sure you didn't love him."

"But I don't understand, Jock. This gold-digger business— What's it all about?"

"Nothing important *now.*"

And his arms were hard about her, his lips claimed hers in a sweet tide of ecstasy.

Kay drew back, hot-cheeked, the question recurring. "Jock. Tell me. You said she found out something."

"That my dad has property and stuff. You see—he owns this department store, Frane and Gibson. But I don't kick the information around and how she came on it I'll never know."

"Jock. You told me he worked for—"

"He does like hell."

She slid from his arms. It was all so clear now, the house on the river, his extravagances, his careless "whims." And she had chased him, trampled her pride to the ground. As she started blindly for the door, he swung her around.

"What now? Are you allergic to money?"

"N-no. But you've made a fool of me. You laughed at poor Edgar, said *you'd* be glad to live in this. This two-by-twice apartment— If you got married, I mean."

Jock grinned crookedly and kissed the bare third finger on her left hand. "You all washed up with Edgar, violet eyes?"

"I suppose so. But that doesn't make any difference."

"It makes all the difference in the world. How about letting me carry you into this two-by-twice apartment? Right soon. Huh?"

You couldn't feel like a fool with Jock looking at you like that, laying the world at your feet. "Another whim?" she teased.

"Best I ever had," he answered, and kissed her eyelids, trailed his mouth down her cheek.

She turned her head slowly and their lips met.

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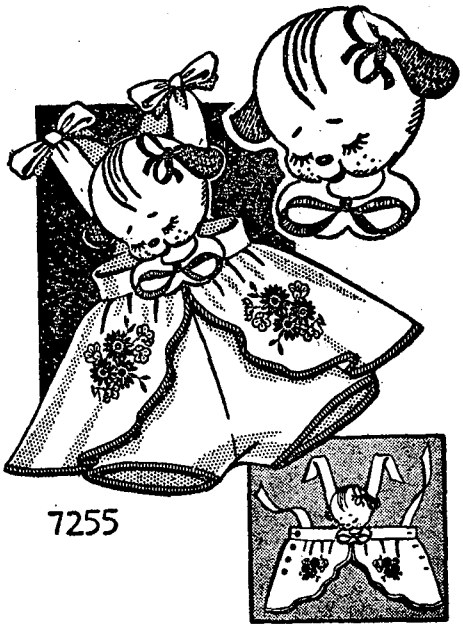
Attractive Needle Page



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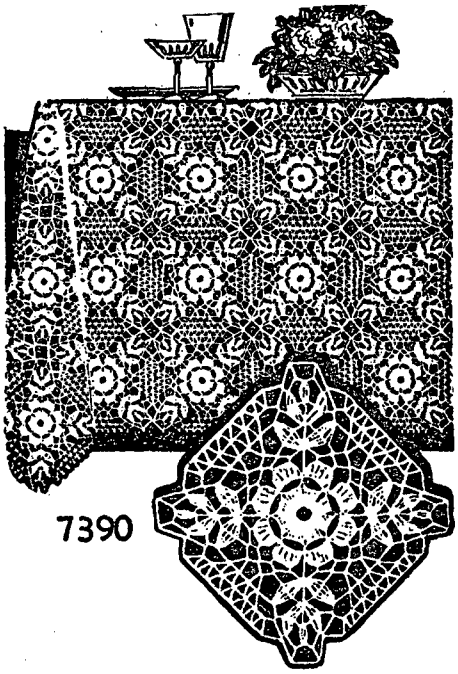

7390

7390 Start with this jiffy medallion and you will soon have a treasured crocheted cloth. Good pickup work! Concise directions given.

7255 Pretty sunsuit for your precious miss. So dainty with apron top, panties to match. Easy-sew. It's in two pieces. Transfer; pattern sizes 1, 2, 3, 4.

7276 Your gift problem solved—everyone loves linens gaily embroidered with *Mr., Mrs., His, Hers.* Transfer of 12 motifs 4 x 5¼ to 5 x 6½ inches. Directions.

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Record Romance

By BUDDY BASCH

ANDY RUSSELL is an artist I've admired for a long time, but it wasn't until about seven months ago that I met him. A friend of mine in California is a business associate of Andy's and wrote me saying, "Drop in at the Roxy Theater and say hello." That opening was the lead I needed. I called and said, "Jerry Johnson suggested I talk to you." Immediately Andy asked when I was coming over, and the next noon I popped in at the theater.

I was sent right up to the star dressing room when I arrived. Andy met me at the door with a wide grin and hearty handshake. He said he was happy to know me and he sounded like he meant it. I remember thinking at the time, "Boy, is this fellow different from some of the phony, stuffed-shirt show business people I've met." Andy introduced his beautiful blonde wife, Della, and waved me into a comfortable leather chair. That afternoon I became a staunch Russell fan!

A few weeks later, after having seen them several times, Andy, Della and I went to the Hotel New Yorker to see Johnny Long's orchestra. The audience was a tough one and received Patti Page and the rest of the show with coolness. If it hadn't been for Andy, applauding and laughing with genuine glee, that particular performance would have really "died." His appreciation sparked the performers and made everyone enjoy them more. That's the sort of fellow Andy is, making things more enjoyable for others because of his own bright personality.

To get to the more factual side, Andy was born in Los Angeles on September 16, 1920. His real name is Andrew Rabago. Because of the difficulty in spelling and pronouncing Rabago, he and bandleader Gus Arnheim changed it to Russell in 1939. Andy has ten brothers and sisters. His father worked in movies, doing small bits in Westerns and outdoor pictures.

Andy began his education at Second Street School, where he says "my biggest achievement was having the best-selling corner among kids who sold papers after school!" At Hollenbeck Junior High he was president of the student body, as well as handball champion of Southern California. During one match he slipped and shattered a bone in his left arm. Because of the fall he spent almost a year at Los Angeles Children's Hospital.

When he got to Roosevelt High School Andy took up boxing. A young Filipino called *Little Dempsey* was his first opponent, and Andy is quick to admit he wasn't much of a match for the boy. Andy was determined to keep his teeth and soon after that gave up boxing!

Next Andy took up drumming to earn a little money. And a little money is just what he earned. He left school when he was offered $1.50 per engagement as a singer with Don Ramon. That didn't help much at home, so Andy began drumming in earnest in or-

Andy Russell, popular Capitol Records star.

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der to participate more in the big profits.

In 1939 Andy joined Gus Arnheim's band. Gus coached and advised him and started him on the road to fame. Andy stayed with Gus three years, singing as well as drumming. He was offered jobs with Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, Charlie Spivak and Sonny Dunham. But they all wanted him to drum. He held out until Alvino Rey offered him a vocalist's job. Now Andy uses drums only for a special routine or for fun.

PAUL WHITEMAN, ABC's Musical Director, appeared on a radio show with Rey and was so impressed with Andy he got him a show of his own. Andy was now on the way.

The first big smash-hit came in 1943, when he was signed to sing for Capital Records. Surprising Andy, his first record (sung in English and Spanish) became a nationwide best-seller. The name of the tune, *Besame Mucho*. His following tunes, *Amor, What a Difference a Day Makes* and *Magic is the Moonlight,* established Andy as a top singer.

After that he got the singing spot on a show with Bob Crosby and signed for an appearance at the swank Versailles night club. An appearance at the Adams Theater in Newark followed. He was delighted when, at the end of the engagement, the management told him he had broken all records there.

The Adams is the place where the famous "balcony scene" took place. A fourteen-year-old miss was so overcome with Andy's rendition of *Besame Mucho* that she fell out of her balcony seat into the orchestra. Miraculously she wasn't hurt and returned the next day, but this time in an orchestra seat!

In 1945 Andy made three motion pictures. You will probably remember seeing him in *Stork Club* and *Breakfast in Hollywood* and hearing his voice in the Walt Disney feature-length cartoon, *Make Mine Music*. Andy married pretty and talented movie and singing starlet Della Norell in Las Vegas in October 1945. The same year he went on a radio program with Joan Davis and got a four-figure weekly pay check. His Capital records really started selling. His next film was *Copacabana,* with Groucho Marx and Carmen Miranda.

The next thing he did was to take over as singing star on *Your Hit Parade*. He stayed there sixty-four weeks on both the CBS and NBC networks. This spot did a great deal toward making him friends and getting him fans. His fans weren't all youngsters, either. The slightly older set went for the good-looking Andy too. Andy Russell Fan Clubs sprang up all over the country. At last count there were about five hundred. The most famous is The Russell Sprouts, a gang that put out a club journal called *Della's Fella!* "Cute names and cute kids," beams Andy whenever he talks about his fans. And he isn't slurring them when he calls them "kids," because he'll talk about someone his own age he likes as "a swell kid."

He went on a personal appearance tour in 1947 and played all the top theaters from coast to coast. In Chicago he was laid low with pneumonia and had to cancel the rest of his engagements on the tour. He went back to Hollywood, had an operation on his throat and rested. For the rest of the year he did nothing but build up a large backlog of records Capitol could release when he was off dashing around the country.

Late in 1947 Andy and Della went to Mexico and brought back a bunch of Mexican love songs. Most of these had never been heard in the States. The first one he recorded was *Muchachita*. Andy and his original discoverer, Gus Arnheim, went into the music publishing business together and *Muchachita* was their first published number. The name of their firm is Monterrey Music Company.

In 1948 Andy opened the year with an appearance at the New York Paramount Theater. This was so successful he got a commercial radio program on 416 MBS stations. The show also featured Marion Hutton, the Pied Pipers and Ray Sinatra's orchestra.

If we look a little closer at the more personal side of handsome Andy, you'll find he is five feet ten inches tall, weighs 160 pounds and has sparkling brown eyes and black hair. He has a smile that would melt a snowman and is soft-spoken and sincere. He listens eagerly to your opinions on various subjects and appreciates your point of view. He rarely goes to night clubs, as he and Della prefer to remain at their ranch-style house in Encino. It is complete with a swimming pool and small walnut grove. Anytime it's sunny, you can see the Russells lounging near the pool. The place once belonged to Ann Dvorak and Leslie Fenton.

Andy prefers conservative, well-tailored suits and although he'll be thirty this year, he looks more like an undergraduate at the local university. He neither smokes nor drinks. He likes his food well-prepared and simply served. Spanish food is his dish and he cooks a bit himself. Della is "great on the Italian stuff."

His preference in music for himself is the romantic ballad, but his huge collection of records includes a great many swing and

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jump tunes. Being an ex-drummer himself, he likes the work of Jo Jones and Zutty Singleton particularly. In the vocal field he likes Bing Crosby, Tony Martin, Connie Haines and Lisa Kirk. Johnny Long's is the band he prefers, and Skitch Henderson is the man he likes best on the piano.

Still crazy about boxing (but not participating, only watching since *Little Dempsey*) Andy goes to see boxing matches about twice a week. If you happen to be near either the Los Angeles Olympic Auditorium or the Hollywood Legion Stadium on boxing nights, drop in. You'll find Andy there, yelling himself almost hoarse.

All in all, Andy Russell is a fellow you'd like very much if you met him. I know, 'cause I did meet him!

Tell us which of your favorite stars you'd like to read about in NEW LOVE. Address a postal to: **Buddy Basch,** New Love Magazine, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y.

Record Reviews

BEST SINGLE RECORDS

★ JOEY NASH (Happiness)

It Isn't Fair
If I Forget You

I always like to pick out a few records on the smaller labels and let our readers in on what I think will be a big hit. Joey Nash ought to be back in the big-time because of his renditions of *It Isn't Fair* and *If I Forget You.* About fifteen years ago, Joey was one of our best-known singers of popular songs. He used *It Isn't Fair* to open and close all his programs and they came to about twelve a week. He made the song famous and now here's a new hit version by the man who originally made it famous. The back, *If I Forget You,* was inspired by the Psalms of David and was written for Joey. Ted Eddy and his orchestra provide excellent and well-planned backing.

★ CARMEN CAVALLARO (Decca)

Music, Music, Music
O, Katharina

The poet of the piano comes through with a couple of more tunes that you will like. Carmen has always played melodious and pleasant music. He adds new flavor to *Music, Music, Music* and adds his bright and pleasant ideas to *O, Katharina.*

★ LISA KIRK (Victor)

Have You Ever Been Lonely
You Missed the Boat
Dearie
Just a Girl That Men Forget

Lisa Kirk is a gal who hasn't made many records, but what terrific ones are the ones she has done. Instead of issuing seven hundred bad records a month, she seems to wait until she finds tunes that are suited to her. Lisa will be the next top-name gal on records, I'll bet. *Have You Ever Been Lonely* is a slow and soothing version of the oldie. *You Missed the Boat* (which sounds a little like *You Can't Stop Me From Loving You*) is an excellent done medium-bounce. Don Cornell is also heard on these sides. The last two are with Fran Warren and seem a little more likely to succeed, alhtough all four are excellent. *Dearie* is one of the year's best. There's a real reason for a duet on this disc. Usually duets are just there, but this has a definite plan. Great side. *Just a Girl That Men Forget* is real gay nineties stuff, but with a modern treatment.

★ ROBERT LENN (MGM)

The Yodel Blues

Accompanied by The Dixielanders, newcomer Robert Lenn gives us a bright and peppy vocal arrangement of *The Yodel Blues.* It's from the Broadway music, *Texas Li'l Darlin'.* Bright and pleasant.

★ RALPH FLANAGAN (Bluebird)

Farewell Amanda
Leave It To Love

Farewell Amanda is written by Cole Porter and is the tune that was the subject of a lot of horseplay in the film *Adam's Rib.* I frankly never thought it could sound this good after hearing it clowned throughout the picture, but Ralph gives the song a steady beat and well thought-out arrangement. Harry Prime's vocal is mighty good. *Leave It To Love* is an instrumental tune, done in a medium-slow tempo. It is an excellent showcase for that "music with the Flanagan flair."

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★ PATTI PAGE (Mercury)

I'll Close My Eyes
Oklahoma Blues

Patti Page has done a lot of great work, but I'd be willing to climb out on the limb and say this is the greatest record she has ever made. (And that takes in a lot of territory.) *I'll Close My Eyes* is a tune on which Patti sings all four parts (as the "Patti Page Quartet!") in harmony. It's unique. Patti, probably the greatest artist on the Mercury label and a wonderful girl besides, does equally well with *Oklahoma Blues.* Patti is from Oklahoma and this tune was written for her by her manager, Jack Rael. The last verse, where she really swings out, will have you stamping your foot hard enough to knock the plaster off the ceiling below you!

★ TONY MARTIN (Victor)

Roulette
It's Easy For You To Say

Here's a couple of more sides by the man who is the hottest thing on records today, without a doubt. His versions of *Marta, There's No Tomorrow* and *I Said My Pajamas* are among the best sellers at Victor. Now he'll have one I'd say will sell just as well. *Roulette* is a thing in which Tony compares love to a game of roulette. The sound effects of an actual roulette and the real chant of a croupier add an authentic flavor to this disc. The back is *It's Easy For You To Say,* one of those sentimental ballads Tony does so well. Henri Rene conducts the large accompanying orchestra.

★ VINCENT LOPEZ (Columbia)

Dixieland Rhumba
The Sweetest Words I Know
In Santiago by the Seas
Here Comes That Mood

Here are Vincent Lopez' first records on the Columbia label. And a mighty good job he does, too. The first is a peppy thing with strains of Dixieland music mixed throughout. Wonderful for dancing. The second is a medium-tempo, well-sung ballad done by Bob Houston, former Johnny Long vocalist. Third is a bright rhumba-fox trot. Fourth is a slow and sentimental ballad. Latter two are sung by Ann Warren.

★ JANE HARVEY (MGM)

Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend
Enjoy Yourself

Diamonds is a sparkling version of the sprightly show-tune from *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes.* Jane should find and sing more like this one. She usually is stuck with a tune she can't or shouldn't do. *Enjoy Yourself,* with some help from Russ Case and the band, is another well-done rhythm tune, which you probably like and know by heart by now.

★ LUCYANN POLK (Bluebird)

Don't Do Something To Someone Else

This is the disc debut of the former T. Dorsey vocalist. Lucyann sounds as good as she looks, and that's mighty good! *Don't Do Something* is well-done. She has a sweet voice, good sense of timing and fine expression. No tricks, but just good singing.

★ TEX WILLIAMS (Capitol)

With Men Who Know Tobacco Best

Tex Williams has a sure-fire follow-up to his *Smoke, Smoke, Smoke.* The full title of this new Western-styled tune is *With Men Who Know Tobacco Best, It's Women Two to One.* Amusing lyrics and a bright beat.

★ DORIS DAY (Columbia)

I Don't Wanna Be Kissed

Cute Doris does a tune I like, and think you will. The words are good for a smile and Ray Noble's arrangement is good for some applause. One of her best.

★ VAUGHN MONROE (Victor)

Bamboo

Bamboo "wood" be a great tune for Vaughn Monroe, someone thought! Someone was right. Here's a fine followup to all those recent Monroe marvels like *Matinee.*

★ BETTY GARRETT-LARRY PARKS (MGM)

Can I Come In For a Second?

There seems to be some discussion as to whether this record can be played on the air, although I don't see any reason for any doubt. It's nothing more than some bright boy and girl patter. Betty and Larry do nicely together.

(Continued on page 129)

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Your Pen Personality

By Mary Frances

Here is a special and exciting feature, written exclusively for our NEW LOVE readers, by the famous Mary Frances, who will send you a personal analysis of your handwriting. Why not take advantage of this offer today? Simply write to her in care of NEW LOVE MAGAZINE, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Send a self-addressed envelope with ten cents, and clip the coupon on page 67.

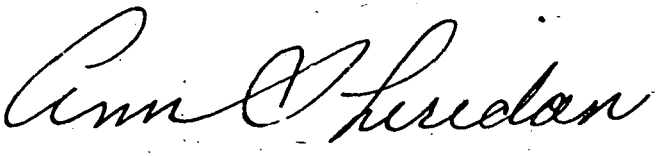
DOES THE ILLUSTRATED signature of Ann Sheridan give you the feeling of motion, rhythm, action? It should, for it is wide, sweeping, and restless. It portrays the vivacious, gay young woman who has been a top favorite in the movie world for several years.

Invariably when a person sees the autograph of a celebrity the first reaction is, "Huh! Some of my own friends write like that." And that is correct. Some of your best friends may well have this style of writing, for it is typically American; typically extrovert; typically the opportunist who knows how to apply current conditions and surroundings to his own person.

Someone once said that an opportunist is one who, finding himself in hot water, would take a bath. The comparison is odious but the idea may well be applied to Ann Sheridan for she never lets conditions get her down. Difficulties, problems, are all taken in her stride and some good use is made of them.

Let's break down the signature for personal comparison. The size of the writing reveals a yearning for people, for contact-work, for mixing with others. The degree of slant tells of Ann's affections, her desire to express her feelings, her thoughts. The medium pressure, with only occasional spurts of extra ink, reveal her energetic nature with just a dash of impatience.

Do you have a wide open "A" like Ann's? Generous souls, both of you. Or maybe you join the first to the second name? An interesting form of logic. Perhaps the "h" in your own signature towers high above the rest of your writing? High ideals, aspirations. You, too, set goals and reach for them determinedly.



Notice the varying sizes of the small "n." There are three in the signature and each is of a different height. Sensitivity and perception are found in people who do this and, this is one of the commonest forms of writing the letter.

The "r" when so pronounced and with such a point, attracts attention. It reveals a tendency to like attention, to like to make others turn around and look. All in all—friendly, likable, popular.

Does that doodle look familiar? Does

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it look as though someone had borrowed your own telephone book doodles and sent them to me? Approximately eight requests from eight different sections of the country came to this office asking for some rationalization.

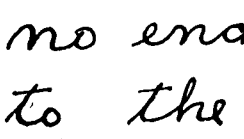
He who doodles dots in orderly rows is a meticulous person, inclined to figure things out carefully; to be a bit "fussy." He will run his finger over a table looking for dust, will correct your pronunciation,

but will always remember your birthday (the year, too!).

Here are three questions in one letter, and all of them of general interest, thus the contents of G.K.'s letter is shared:

Dear Miss Frances:
I notice, first, that some of my friends chop off the beginning and endings of strokes. Second, one of my slightly eccentric friends makes a tiny loop within a loop, as I have shown, and third, another of my odd friends makes even the lowly i-dot very close to the letter.
Please tell me what they all mean?
G.K.

The illustrations given tell more than all the words themselves:



The chopped off strokes G.K. asked about indicates a person who is striving for efficiency, for accuracy, for rejection of all unnecessary facts.

That odd looking "I" is the loop within a loop G.K. has asked about. "Eccentric," the word used to describe the individual making this is the best one-word description which can be given. Chances are you may never see anything like this again, but if you should, expect sudden personality quirks.

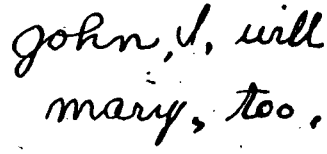
The i-dot which is so very accurate, precise, that it looks as though it had been drawn in tells of one who likes detailed

work and likes to follow orders. Such a person has little imagination.

From Dorcas R. comes the letter:

Dear Miss Frances:
Does a graphologist ever cure a person of an inferiority complex? If so, how? If not, wouldn't it be something special to develop? Wouldn't you go down in graphological history?
Dorcas R.

No female wants to be considered historical. As for the "complex—" it is possible to ascertain feelings of inferiority, feelings which cause a person to feel that he is less than his friends in his own eyes. The capital letters are undersized and the "I" is flat, uninteresting looking:



This was written by a person who had extreme feelings of inferiority, who always underestimated his value to the world.

Dear Mary Frances:
Is it possible to specifically point out a vocation one should follow, strictly from handwriting? Can you say definitely if a person is specifically a doctor, or a lawyer?
Worried Lou.

A graphologist is capable of telling you what line of work you are best suited to follow but whether you follow it often depends on family finances, on environment, on educational advantages. External factors, home pressures, all have an influence. Therefore it is best, when writing an analyst for this data, to give a brief out-

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line of educational possibilities. Assuming your writing showed you would make a fine physician, but your finances wouldn't permit, the next best line of work along this trend would be suggested.

A man may induce his son to follow in his footsteps, inherit the family farm. The son, loyal and willing to please his father, may agree although secretly yearning for more schooling and a chance at teaching. The graphologist will see the instincts for teaching, but not necessarily the fulfilment of it. But don't get too worried, for psychologists and vocational counselors tell us that very few sincerely work at the line for which they are best suited. Most of us concentrate on second, third, or fourth choice.

Questions Asked Most Often

1. "Is there an American style of handwriting, so pronounced that a person may pick up a letter and state positively that it was written by—say, a New Englander?"

No. The British have a small, conservative style. The Latin countries may be observed through the easy flowing, rhythmic, extravagant capitals, the Germans through their heavy script, but the Americans—product of the melting pot—do not have what is popularly considered an "American style." The average American penmanship is the moderately large writing which slants toward the right and is rather shaded. Translated into characteristics it tells of an extrovert; one who loves people, contact, and who is impatient for results.

It isn't possible to positively identify the writer as being peculiar to a particular section of the country.

2. "Who is more interested in handwriting-analysis—men or women?"

I have spoken before men's groups and women's groups. The interest was the same except that men asked more questions pertaining to vocational and industrial uses of graphology, whereas women asked more personal questions. But they both questioned. Both showed the desire for analysis. Both followed up their "in-person" questions with written requests.

3. "Why do you analysts always tell people just the nice things? Why don't you say something bad once in a while?"

Our own traits are such a personal part of our everyday life that we are used to them, therefore don't regard them as "bad." We may admit to being "impatient" now and then, under justifiable conditions, but it's the other fellow who has a "bad temper." We acknowledge that we may be "extravagant about nice things," but our enemy, who has the same trait, is a "spendthrift."

Analysts have a habit of telling what they believe. I once told a man he had a bad temper and he went into a rage denying it. Faced with the obvious he shouted that this was "justifiable indignation."

Even your best friend won't tell you some of the characteristics a professional

(Continued on page 123)

Send this coupon and a sample of handwriting with 10c and a stamped self-addressed envelope to:

Mary Francis, c/o New Love Magazine **June, 1950**
205 East 42nd Street
New York 17, N. Y.

NAME .....

STREET ADDRESS.....

CITY..... STATE.....

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Heart In Danger

By DORIS KNIGHT

(CONCLUSION)

When Linette handed her love to Jeff she didn't know she was buying a ticket to murder.

CHAPTER TEN

Any Man Who Loves a Girl!

JEFF HELD HER closer in his arms and Linette clung to him, burying her face against his coat.

"I'm out in the cold, trying to figure some answers," he repeated. "What's it all about, sweetheart?"

As she told him about Lyn she watched some of the old wariness come back to his face. She felt his arms slacken about her and he led her over to the sofa.

"Let's see if I've got this all straight,

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darling," he said taking her cold hand in his. "You've got a cousin who's a couple of years older than you. You haven't seen her for years, and then suddenly, pouf, she appears on your doorstep. You let her stay all night, and you go off the next morning before she's awake. You come home to find her being carted away in an ambulance. Someone scratched her face—you say?"

"I'd say it was clawed," Linette corrected, "by someone with long fingernails."

He patted her hand, observing her short nails, and stood up. "I've got to feed myself to the newspaper if necessary."

She looked blank. "You mean—you're going to tell the newspaper that I hated my cousin Lyn and probably clawed her face, and then went and clipped my nails?" She was hurt and a little angry, too.

He shook his head. "Nothing about you hating this Lyn goes into the record," he told her crisply. "It's the angle of you, the lovely young model and potential stage star, having a cousin with the same name who gets herself beaten up, that's going to delight my readers."

Linette smiled at him. "You are a ghoul," she said.

He caught her close in his arms again, and said, his lips against her ear, "Oh, darling, darling, don't let's ever fight. Don't let's even have a single tiny misunderstanding. I can't take it! I didn't dream I'd ever be this much in love. But I am."

Linette didn't want to give in to this feeling of loving him so much, so she gave him a little push. "If the telephone still is working," she said, "you can ring your newspaper from here. Everything's in a terrible mess. Poor Lyn— She must have put up a pretty good battle."

Reluctantly, Jeff let her go. He said, "Holding you in my arms is very habit forming, Linette! The minute you're not in my arms, I feel—lonely."

Linette looked at him, her eyes glazed with tears. She whispered, "That's the nicest thing anybody ever said to me, Jeff!"

They exchanged a long, long look which seemed to say so much that mere words could not express. Then Jeff went into the bedroom to telephone in his information to the newspaper.

MRS. BATES probably was listening at the door. Because she came bustling into the room the minute Linette answered her knock. She sighed as she looked around. "Your lovely things, Linette! Just look at the way things have been ruined! Ink spilled on your thick Chinese rugs. And the cushions on your beautiful studio couch just cut to pieces!"

She stopped for breath. When she looked at Linette again, there was a different expression on her face. A rather calculating expression. She went on, "Somebody must hate you very much, Linette. What did you *do* to somebody in the past to have a thing like this happen to your poor cousin who just looked like you? And to destroy your possessions in such a—a *vicious* way"

Linette shook her head. She said, "I know it must seem like that, Mrs. Bates. But honestly, there hasn't been anything."

Mrs. Bates was about to say something else. But Jeff came back into the room just then.

He said crisply, "I'll help Linette get this room into some sort of shape. But you'd better send up that handy man, or janitor, or whoever it is I see creeping around the stairs occasionally. He can carry some of the stuff out that's beyond repair."

Mrs. Bates frowned. "I do think I'll have to get rid of Cleever," she said in an exasperated voice. "He had a stomach attack this afternoon. Said it was very bad. So he went to see a doctor. He isn't

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back yet." And just when he's needed."

Linette was looking at Jeff and thinking: *He's what I've been waiting for, all my life! I never did want the things Aunt Hester thought were so important. I'd rather go on with my career and help make money. I'll keep me contented. I'm not the social or domestic type.*

Jeff got rid of Mrs. Bates. Linette noticed that he did it very deftly, without hurting her feelings.

Jeff said, the minute she was gone, "I telephoned the paper and handed them the information. The boss was so pleased he said we could have that important conference tomorrow. I turned in the material for my column first thing this morning. So I'm free as air to stay with you."

Linette clung to him. "I'm not the clinging vine type usually, darling. But I'm beginning to be more scared than ever. I don't know what I'd do, if I were alone right now."

He kissed the top of her head. "Look angel, you mustn't be alone tonight. Get one of your friends to come in and stay with you."

Linette felt rather odd. "I have a great many acquaintances," she said, stressing the word. "But—well, I wonder if you understand, Jeff? It's sort of difficult to explain. If a girl is—is very pretty, she doesn't have any close girl friends when she's my age. Because girls don't want a pretty girl around as possible competition for their boy-friends."

Her cheeks were fiery red. "I know that sounds frightfully conceited," she finished breathlessly. "But I'm not."

He tilted her chin with his forefinger and looked into her troubled eyes. "Nothing the matter with those eyes," he said fondly. "And if they do see straight, then certainly they'd know you're the prettiest girl in the whole wide world."

Linette said, "Let's get this place in some sort of order."

It was quite a job. They both were tired and breathless, an hour later, when they had done their best, and restored some measure of order to the rooms.

Linette pushed back the damp tendrils of soft honeygold hair which had fallen over her forehead. She blurted out something which had been bothering her.

"Jeff. You just run a column on the newspaper. Why did you have to—tell them about—me?"

He faced her, his eyes troubled. "Everybody who works for the *Graphic* is loyal to the paper, darling. I do a certain amount of straight reporting, along with my other work. There, does that answer everything?" He sounded, she thought, a little angry. His next sentence explained that, in part. "Of course, being engaged to a mere news reporter is a trifle different from being engaged to the very rich and very social, Kirk Breen!"

Linette cried, "Jeff, you're jealous! How wonderful!" She went to his arms as if she belonged there.

Holding her so close they two seemed one, he said, his lips against her own, "Of course I'm jealous, angel. Any man who loves a girl as I do, is going to be jealous of every other man!"

Someone knocked on the door just as he was kissing her.

Linette drew a deep, shuddering breath, gathered her heart back from the stars in the heavens, and smoothed down her tumbled curls. "Probably Mrs. Bates again," she whispered.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Love Letters

BUT IT wasn't Mrs. Bates; it was Kirk, and he never had looked more poised and charming.

He said, without any preamble at all, and as if Jeff hadn't been within a thousand miles, "I've just come from the hospital, Linette. Why didn't you tell

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me Lyn had come here? She promised she'd keep away from you!"

Linette pulled her scattered wits together and said, "I think I understand everything now, Kirk. Why you—sort of fell for me and everything. It's all right. Why don't you just forget you ever knew me and concentrate on winning Lyn back again?"

"It's perfectly true I was surprised and—and sort of shocked when I first saw you," he admitted. "You did remind me very much of Lyn. But you must believe this. She is out of my life completely. She has been, for years."

Jeff said softly in a dangerous voice. "Ah, that's why you went to the hospital to see Lyn. You read about the attack on Lyn in the newspapers no doubt—But of course, you couldn't have! The morning papers aren't on the street yet, and the afternoon papers were too late to splash the story. Then—how did you find out about Lyn, Mr. Breen?"

Kirk said flatly, not looking at Jeff, "Lyn had the hospital people telephone me."

Jeff flashed a triumphant glance at Linette, and she thought. This is a very awkward situation. I'll have to get rid of Kirk, before he spoils everything for me.

She said, "I've figured out a lot of things, Kirk. You knew Lyn was in town, and you entered those two paintings of hers in the exhibition, to spite her, knowing that she goes in for modern painting. And you wanted me to go to the exhibition with you just to show her how little you cared for her. To flaunt me in her face! Isn't that right?"

"No," Kirk said, but there was no force to the denial.

Jeff took over again. "Linette has promised to marry me, Mr. Breen," he said in a matter-of-fact voice.

Linette said unhappily, hating to hurt Kirk, "That's right, Kirk. I'm—sorry about everything. But—it wouldn't have worked out for us. "We're too—different."

Kirk said, momentarily shedding his veneer, "I never give up, Linette. I want *you*. Not Lyn, nor any other woman in the world. Just you. And what I want, I get."

On that excellent exit line, he left, without even saying good-bye.

Linette thought: Oh, dear! That was marvelous theater! But it shows how hurt and furious Kirk is. And he was so good to me, and I've repaid him by hurting his pride. I should have handled things better.

Jeff didn't take her in his arms immediately. He said slowly, "Are you sure about this, Linette? We haven't known each other very long. It's happened, snap, bang! I want you to be positive you want me and not the Breen millions."

Linette glared at him. "That's the most insulting thing anybody ever said to me, Jeff Geary!"

That warm, slow grin of his engulfed her and made her heart begin to thunder and her mouth to want his kisses. "How do you always know just what to say to me, Linette?" he murmured. "I'm properly ashamed of that last statement. But if you must know, I was practically seeing the world through green spectacles—I was so jealous."

He kissed her and she wanted it to go on and on, but he had to get back to the office.

"I hate to leave you here," he said, with deep concern in his voice. "Promise me you'll keep the door locked and not open it for anyone!"

She said unsteadily, "I'm afraid to stay here."

THEY BOTH thought for a while. Then Jeff beamed. "Of course. The very thing. A hotel. Not a little hideaway hotel, but a nice big old-fashioned central hotel, like the St. Francis. That's where you'll be perfectly safe, angel."

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Linette looked dubious. "But they're always booked away in advance, Jeff!" she objected. "And I don't know . . . "

He brushed her objections aside as unimportant. "Darling," he said with the air of small boy showing off before his five-year-old sweetheart, "you underrate the power of the press! Your ex-fiancé, Kirk Breen, may have riches on his side, but I've got a more powerful weapon, influence. Watch your Uncle Jeff get you a reservation!"

He went into the bedroom and she could hear him calling the hotel and talking to someone and sounding pleased. She leaned back, closed her eyes, and rested. She thought: In the last two days I've lived a whole lifetime. I know what they mean now, about Time being a relative sort of thing. I feel as if I know Jeff better than any man I've ever met. I feel as if I'd known him always.

He was strutting with pleasure when he came back into the living room. He said, "Like I said, angel-face, your husband-to-be is a very important guy. Go in there and pack a few odds and ends and I'll drive you to the hotel suite I've got engaged for you!"

Linette was wondering if she could afford to stay overnight in a suite and Jeff must have read her mind.

"This is compliments of *The Graphic,* angel. Strictly for free." He grinned at her. "And they'll roll out the red carpet for you, beautiful!"

She went into the bedroom and hurriedly packed an over-night case. At the last minute she threw in the script of *Moonlight For Marta,* and then went in the bath room and turned on the shower.

She dived into it, rejoicing in the brisk play of the lukewarm needles of water on her body. It relaxed her somewhat, and she went back to the bedroom and sat down at her dressing table.

There, propped up against the mirror was a large sheet of copy paper. She had seen just such paper stuffed in every pocket of Jeff's suit that afternoon. Newspaper copy paper! Jeff wrote on it with a soft lead pencil, like every other reporter in the world, if he wanted to take notes.

And now, written very black with a soft lead pencil were the words:

You got away once . . . next time it will be different!

SHE FELT as if somebody had struck her a blow right to the heart. She shivered a little, and went on dressing mechanically, putting on her makeup, and doing things to her hair that made her look still more glamorous. She wasn't thinking about what she was doing. Her whole attention was riveted on that sheet of rough copy paper.

Could she be all wrong Jeff? Had he staged all this love stuff just to get her over suspecting him? Was he a cold and calculating monster who meant to kill her for something she hadn't done?

Her heart cried, "No, no! Jeff is wonderful! Jeff is the other half of *me.* If I don't have Jeff, I'll go through life just half a person."

But a small, logical part of her mind not dominated by emotion, said coldly, "After all, what do you know about this man? He bobbed up at the reading of the play. He fixed things so you brushed Kirk Breen out of your life."

Her heart argued, "He couldn't have wrecked the apartment and attacked Lyn! He was with *me,* at that time."

Her mind flashed right back, "You just heard him boast that he can get anything done, through Influence. He may have hired some thug to beat you up, and the man made a mistake and got Lyn."

She found out, to her surprise, that she was dressed, in her gray gabardine suit with the shell-pink blouse and black straw hat.

She picked up the sheet of copy paper. For one reckless moment she thought of

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tossing it into the wastebasket and ignoring it. Then she realized that if she didn't thrash this thing out with Jeff here and now, it would remain between them like a barrier, forever.

Summoning all her courage she opened the door. It seemed a million years ago that she had gone into the bedroom.

Jeff was over by her spindley desk, reading her letters! She stopped short, drawing a swift, gasping breath of horror.

He heard her and looked up, a warm smile spreading across his face. He didn't seem the least bit embarrassed or worried.

He said, "You've had a nice crop of guys crazy about you, honeybun! Makes me mighty proud to come out top man!"

Linette forgot the warning note written on the copy paper. She went swiftly across the room, with her effortless mannikin's stride. "Jeff Geary," she cried, "I didn't give you permission to read my letters and—and snoop."

His smile faded. He looked serious. "Sorry, angel. I thought you'd catch on, right away. I'm digging to find something to guide us. I'm working in the dark on this thing. You *must* know why somebody is gunning for you. But maybe you've pushed it so far down into your subconscious mind that you don't realize it ever happened. Because you want it *not* to have happened. See?"

Linette said coldly, "Spare me the psychology, Jeff. The fact still remains, that I caught you snooping among my private papers. And after this—" She waved the sheet of copy paper at him, "I—I don't know what to think."

He took it from her, a look of horror on his face. Was it real, she wondered, or was he putting on an act?

"Great jumping leapfrogs," he stammered, "Surely you don't think that I—" He felt in his pockets and pulled out several sheets of identical paper, saying in a muffled voice, "Great grief, Linette, you can't think that I—"

She interrupted sadly, "I'm all mixed up, Jeff. I don't know what to think. I still love you. I can't help that. But—"

"But you don't trust me!" He glared at her. "Is that the score? Well, I'll tell you what I'm going to do, Linette. I'm taking this warning note right straight to the police!"

"Give it to somebody named O'Malley," she told him, trying to keep the relieved sound out of her voice. "He was the one who asked me a million questions just before you dashed on to the scene."

She managed a wan smile. "I tried to keep you out of this by lying to O'Malley about—us. I just got through telling him we were mere acquaintances when in you dashed, making me the biggest liar in San Francisco."

Jeff stared at the warning note. "Somebody wants to cut you off from everybody, angel," he said slowly. "Especially me! Don't let them get away with it, Linette. I give you my word of honor. No matter how crazy it looks, I'm guilty of nothing out of line but reading your old love yetters! They were on top of your desk in a little heap. I—"

Linette drew a deep breath. "Darling, after all, reading those letters so avidly, does sort of *clear* you!"

He asked suspiciously, "How come?"

"Because, last night, the prowler who left his footprints in the spilled sugar, went to a lot of trouble to read all my letters! I know he did, because they were arranged wrong, and some were in different envelopes. The desk was pulled out a little, too. And don't you see? If *you* were the person doing all this frightening, you wouldn't have to read my old love-letters again!"

He caught fire from her enthusiasm and swept her into his arms for a swift kiss. Then he said, "Come on, darling. We'll go to the St. Francis and get you safely tucked away. Then I'll take this to the police."

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CHAPTER TWELVE

Someone Must Pay!

HER MOOD of relief lasted till she got to the safe, heavily perfumed lobby of the St. Francis hotel. It always seemed to Linette that the perfumes left by lovely ladies for the past two decades lingered on in that busy lobby.

As Jeff escorted her over to the desk, Linette suddenly had an idea. "Hadn't I better register under another name?" she whispered.

He thought for a moment, then he nodded, and as quickly changed his mind. "No. That's out!" he said. "I gave your right name when I reserved the room for you."

Linette said, "Maybe it's better that way, anyhow. I'd feel sort of—queer, if I didn't use my right name."

The clerk was very suavely delighted to welcome Miss Linette Joyce, sponsored by *The Graphic*. She signed her name and address on the card. The bellhop was given a key and Linette said good-bye to Jeff.

The sixth-floor suite was attractive and luxurious. To live up to it, Linette gave the bellboy a dollar for carrying her one small suitcase.

He beamed at her affectionately. "Thank *you,* Miss," he said, "How about some ice water?"

She shook her head. "No thank you."

She was sorry when the door was closed and locked behind him, that she hadn't asked for ice water. She felt horribly lonely, and forsaken. She unpacked. That took five minutes. She put her hat and coat in the spacious closet built to accommodate dozens of dresses.

She looked at her watch and couldn't believe that it was only ten o'clock. It seemed a million years since Jeff had driven her back from Fisherman's Wharf to her apartment house.

Going to the window she looked down on the exciting street below: Powell Street with its crazy little green cable car and its crowds of people, that looked like ants toiling up a steep hill. She was fascinated by the scene, but she knew it was partly to keep from thinking about Jeff.

She didn't want to dwell on the odd circumstances that didn't tie in: His shabby convertible, for instance. Why hadn't he driven up in that car, to Madame McLean's salon? Why had he taken the street car? One of those same jolting cars she was looking down on at that very moment.

THE TELEPHONE rang, shattering the deadly silence. She ran to answer, glad to have the direction of her thoughts changed. Positive that it would be Jeff she cried, "Hello dear."

To her amazement it was Derry Tilford's sonorous voice on the other end of the wire. He ignored her greeting, evidently taking it for the equivalent of the "sweetheart" with which all theatrical people greeted each other.

He said, "I had to find out if you're all right, really, Linette. The police were here, questioning me about that telegram which came here for you. They told me about your cousin Lyn being beaten so outrageously in mistake for you. I don't like that, Linette. I don't, indeed!"

She broke in to ask in amazement, "How under the sun did you know I was here. Nobody is supposed to know where I am!"

He chuckled. "If that is so, my dear, you'd better change landladies! After the police left, I rang your apartment. Mrs. Bates answered. She said she and the handy man were repairing a couple of cracked panes in the windows, brought about by the fight between your cousin and her assailant."

"Oh!" Linette said realizing that Cleever must have come back.

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She went on after a tiny pause, "But I still don't see how you could know I was *here*."

Derry Tilford's rich, indulgent laugh came gurgling over the wire. "I was waiting for you to ask that," he said delightedly. "It was Mrs. Bates, of course! She *says* she heard you both mention the St. Francis Hotel when you were going downstairs. But what I think *did* happen, was that she had her ear glued to the keyhole! Anyhow she tipped me off you'd be there, and you were!"

The sense of being safe and protected, disappeared. In its stead came fear. If Derry Tilford had found out so easily where she was, the person who had been following her could find her, too.

"I'm a trifle worried, Linette," he went on to say, "I wasn't going to tell you this, but the play—"

He paused, and Linette gasped, "Yes? What about the play?"

Being Derry Tilford, he didn't answer directly. "I don't know whether you read about the contest the Little Theater group held a while ago?"

Quivering with anxiety to know what he had to tell her, Linette took a firm grasp on her patience and said, "Of course I read all about it." She added, to forestall any further detours, "And I know that *Moonlight For Marta* won, and the author got a thousand dollars for letting the Little Theater group give the play for two weeks in the outdoor theater at Carmel-by-the-Sea. But—"

Derry Tilford said, "Ah, yes! But *did* you know who wrote that play?"

Linette gritted her teeth. "The contest was open only to West Coast residents who never had the joy of having a play produced on any stage," she said as sweetly as she could. "So I don't remember the name of the author, but why should—"

Derry was interrupting again. "The person who wrote the play is—Geary Jeffries! Now turn that name around backwards and—Now do you understand? It's that newspaper man who does the column in *The Graphic*, Jeff Geary!"

"Oh," said Linette blankly.

"There's something else very odd about the whole thing," Derry went on impressively. "That play is about a girl being frightened practically out of her senses by the man she fascinated, when she was a mere child, to the point where he asked his wife for a divorce and drove her to suicide. The *wife*, I mean. In some way the man loses track of the girl who caused all the trouble in his life. When he finds her again, by accident, he tracks her down relentlessly, and—"

Linette gasped, "Why should that seem to be so—odd to you, Mr. Tilford?"

He answered, a fond note in his wonderful voice, "I though it was to be Derry and Linette for us now, my dear!"

She closed her eyes and prayed for patience.

"Derry," she murmured into the phone. "Why do you find this all so strange."

"Because," he said triumphantly, "Jeff got the idea for his play from newspaper stories of about five years ago. The whole thing took place in Riverdale. And Riverdale is *your home town*, Linette."

She had to try twice before she could speak. There seemed to be something the matter with her throat. She croaked out finally, "How do you *know* he got his idea for the play from—from the Carrington case in Riverdale?"

"Because I got in touch with the Little Theater coach and he told me so. Jeff had to get a release from the only living member of the family, Jim Carrington. He's in a private sanitarium. Not mad, you know. Just—mentally unstable. He's been there ever since the tragedy happened. Jeff didn't think there was a chance of his signing, but he did. Like a shot! He seemed to like the idea of a play being made about his tragedy. Really nuts, I guess, poor fellow!"

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Linette heard all this through a blur of emotion. There was a buzzing in her head as if a myriad of bees were there. And all at once she was beginning to understand. But her mind still rejected the explanation, even though something within her told her that none the less it was true.

"That's why I thought I ought to get hold of you and warn you, right away," Derry was saying. "You went off with the newspaperman from the rehearsal, they told me. You'd better be careful of him! He's probably been the one who's been scaring you, all the way."

"But why?" whispered Linette. "Why should Jeff frighten me?"

Derry's answer was prompt, "Because you're going to play Marta, who's scared half out of her wits all through the show! *Good publicity.* That's why. You get scared enough, and you go to the cops. It makes the newspapers. Jeff Geary gets thousands of dollars worth of free publicity and maybe his play lands on Broadway and he's all set for a big successful career. Get the picture?"

"Yes," said Linette. "Yes. I get the picture. Good-bye, Derry, and thanks for calling."

She put the phone back in its cradle and sat looking at it, but all she could see was Jeff Geary's blue eyes.

INSIDE HER, was a cold knot of fear. And something worse than fear. Disillusionment. Despair.

She tried to think back about the Carrington case. It was important for her to remember.

But the picture she conjured up was cloudy because her life in Riverdale had been so unhappy that nothing but her own personal misery stood out. Aunt Hester was a dragon who refused to let Linette have a good time. Lyn was a beautiful, arrogant, hateful creature, who did her best to make Linette's life a tragedy. Outsiders were just blurs.

The couple next door were quiet people without any children. The man's name was Jim Carrington. He was tall and blue-eyed. People in Riverdale whispered that he was younger than his lovely wife, Felice. Not that it mattered. He was mad about her. Until the scandal happened . . .

Linette had been awfully surprised to hear about Mr. Carrington carrying on with anybody when he loved his wife so much. She just couldn't understand it. As far as she could remember, no other girl went near the Carrington house but Lyn. Come to think of it, she used to go over quite often to practice on the piano. Lyn was taking lessons and Aunt Hester wouldn't buy a piano, and Felice Carrington had said Lyn might practice at their house whenever she liked . . .

Linette gripped her hands tightly together, feeling eddies of horror sweep over her. So many things were clearing, the way you saw a picture develop in a darkroom, coming more definite with each succeeding second, until all at once, there was the finished product staring at you!

Linette got up and walked around the room, her legs feeling queer and numb and her hands prickling oddly.

Lyn . . . Lyn had been the girl in the Carrington case! The whole town knew. That was why Aunt Hester had sent Linette away so abruptly to that boarding school in Palo Alto!

No. That wasn't right. The whole town knew that *one* of the Joyce girls was responsible for the Carrington tragedy. But did they know — which one? No. Of course they didn't. Aunt Hester had seen to that. Aunt Hester, who loved Lyn so devotedly and who never had cared a snap of her bony fingers for Linette. Aunt Hester had sent Linette away—fast. She had kept her away, with only infrequent visits to Riverdale. And during those visits, Linette had been kept strictly at home.

Slowly, fumblingly, Linette thought it out: *Aunt Hester told everybody I was*

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the Linette Joyce mentioned in the suicide note poor Felice Carrington left behind her. She protected Lyn at my expense. And now, somebody is trying to kill me for revenge.

She walked around some more, her thoughts keeping pace with her. Dark, somber thoughts.

Could Jeff Geary be—Jim Carrington? Surely not!

And yet, Jeff had told her he was twenty-five. But he could have been lying. Jim Carrington would be about thirty or more.

She went to the phone and rang the police department. After a great deal of delay and many statements concerning her name, she was connected with O'Malley.

"Where did they take my cousin, Lyn Joyce?" she asked him, keeping her voice steady with an effort. "I—I've been so upset about everything, I just now realized I don't know—where she is."

The policeman told her the name of the hospital. "But she can't speak to anybody for about twenty-four hours. She was hysterical, so they put her under opiates."

He added, sounding almost human, "We wanted to ask her a lot of questions but it wasn't any soap. We'll have to wait to find out if she knows the identity of her assailant."

"Oh," said Linette.

He misunderstood. "She'll be fine in a couple of days. Nothing serious. Just the shock of being so savagely attacked."

Linette thanked him and replaced the telephone on the stand. She would have to wait to question Lyn about this theory of hers. Belatedly, she realized that her cousin probably would have lied lustily in any case.

She went back to pacing the floor.

Everybody in Riverdale *but* Jim Carrington thought it was Linette Joyce, a precocious teenager, who had broken up the Carrington home. Jim Carrington would know the truth. Then why had he followed *Linette*?

She thought: I should have told O'Malley everything. But she couldn't. It was all too horrible.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Run Linette, Run!

SHE STILL was feeling totally unnerved and sunk when the telephone shrilled again. It was Jeff.

She fought to make her voice sound nautral, but his voice told her that he knew something was wrong. "What's up, Linette?" he demanded sharply. "Has anything happened?"

She thought: *He may be Jim Carrington!* He may be the one! I've got to be careful. It may mean my very life.

But all the time, her silly, senseless heart was telling her, "He's your true-love, Linette! He's the other half of you! He's that dream prince you've been waiting for, all your life. You must trust him. You must."

Jeff repeated his question anxiously, "Linette, answer me! What's the matter?"

She said the first thing which came into her mind. "Derry Tilford rang me here at the hotel. He *knew* I was here."

He sounded angry as he said, "The dickens! How did he find out?"

Linette explained about Mrs. Bates.

"Um," murmured Jeff. "Sounds fishy to me. Linette, be careful of that man! I don't trust him."

Linette fought down an hysterical inclination to gasp: *You ought to find out what he says about you!*

Instead she asked, "Jeff, did you write *Moonlight For Marta*?"

He sounded very embarrassed as he said, "Well, yes, I did, Linette! That's why I was hanging around to hear the rehearsal."

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Linette felt as if cold clods of earth were falling on her heart. Derry hadn't been mistaken. Jeff had written the play! She had to ask another question. Not the one she really wanted to ask him, but one she dared to ask.

"Why didn't you write the play under your real name?"

"And have the boys at the paper kid the pants off me? Nothing doing! If you're a success as a playwrite, fine. Everybody yells hurrah! But when you're trying to get a foothold in the hardest racket to break into, in the writing game, everybody thinks you're very, very funny. Especially if you try a couple of turkeys and they flop but *cold,* the way I've done before."

She went on, feeling her way very carefully and wishing she could see his facial expression as she murmured carelessly, "Derry said you dug up the idea for your play out of newspaper stuff from away back. Is that right?"

He said, rather impatiently, "Yes. I got hold of a tragedy that took place in Riverdale—Hey! Wait a minute! I never thought about it till just now. That's your home town, isn't it?"

Linette said coldly, "Yes it is. And your cousin, Bernice lives there. Remember? She was the one who suggested that you look me up. Or have you forgotten?"

He sounded embarressed. "Of course I haven't forgotten. Look here, Linette, your voice seems—queer. I think you're scared half to death. Listen. If we get married in California, we'll have to wait. Even if we get our licence tomorrow morning, it'll be close to a week before we can be man and wife. I want to take care of you, Linette. I'm going to be scared every minute I'm away from you. So let's fly to Reno and be married tonight!"

Evidently he paused to draw breath. "Are you willing to marry me tonight, darling?" he finished tenderly.

Linette's heart took over, completely. "Oh, yes, Jeff darling!" she breathed.

He seemed to be thinking aloud. "Let's see. It's close to eleven now. I've got a few things to do up here at the office. I ought to make it to the St. Francis by midnight. That'll give us ample time to drive to the airport and make the one o'clock flight."

Linette was filled with remorse for having misjudged Jeff.

He said, "I love you, darling. I guess I love you better than I love myself. I didn't think love was like that. I didn't indeed! I'm just telling you this, so you'll take care, darling! You're—my life."

Linette felt sobs grip her throat. She said softly, "I'll be careful, dear. Come—come as soon as you can."

"Be ready. I'll make it in less than an hour if I possibly can get things done. Don't open the door to anybody, dear. I'll rap three times." He repeated softly, "I love you, Linette." Then the connection was broken.

LINETTE DASHED ABOUT, packing the few things she had brought with her. She put on her hat and hung her coat on the back of a chair near the door and put her gloves and handbag beside them.

When she was ready, she realized she had consumed exactly eight minutes! She had nearly an hour to wait.

Restlessly she went to the window and looked out. No longer were the neon signs bright and vivid. A haze of fog was over everything, blurring outlines and making them indistinct. Maybe their flight would be cancelled because of the fog. She felt sick with misery at the idea.

If she had something to read to make the time go by!

Then she remembered the manuscript of the play that she had packed. That at least would help for a while!

It wasn't very cheerful reading. The terror of the girl who was being hounded

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for revenge was very real and very horrible. But it was quite different from the things which had happened to her.

She thought as she read: This is very different from me. Why did I think it so similar?

The second act was a flashback of what had led up to the tragedy and the tragedy itself. It was very skillfully done.

But it was when she was well into the third act, that Linette knew such horror that she felt faint from it.

The brother of the man who had fallen for the girl, was the one seeking revenge. He tried in every way to bring about the girl's death. Finally he was driven to making love to her. He even proposed marriage!

Linette's mouth grew dry and her heart began to pound crazily.

Typewritten words leaped out at her from the page. She read: "We'll elope to Reno and be married there my little love, so I can protect you."

She sat stiffly, clutching the sheets of paper, as she read the line: "There's a one o'clock plane. We'll take that."

She began to read faster skipping bits, until she came to the climax. The man drove the frightened girl in the direction of the airport. In a deserted lane, he stopped the car and turned on her. He told her everything in a big scene that Linette's sense of the drama applauded, even as her skin crawled in horror as she read:

"There isn't any one o'clock plane. I made that up. To get you here. So I could—kill you."

Linette got just that far. In panic, she jumped up, pulling on her coat in such haste that she almost tore the lining. She snatched up her suitcase and then decided against that. She left the play too. She never wanted to see it again.

Clutching her handbag, she went out into the hallway. Her feet sank deep into the thick pile of the carpet. She hurried toward the elevator, breathing fast. *She had to get away.*

She had to run from the man she loved. If she wanted to go on living!

The elevator stopped at her floor. It was filled with people. Laughing, talking, normal people. A little of Linette's blind terror went from her as she thought: Maybe there *is* a one o'clock plane to Reno. I've got to find out.

The girl at the plane information desk was flirting with a handsome man. Reluctantly she flipped open a timetable and ran her sharp pointed pencil down a column.

"There isn't any one o'clock plane," she told Linette carelessly. "There's a five A.M. plane. That's the first one."

As Linette stumbled away, she heard the man say, "Awful rush to get to Reno, isn't she?"

And the girl's amused reply, "Wants to get rid of her husband, I guess."

Linette thought, as she hurried out the Post Street entrance of the hotel: No. You're wrong. Her husband-to-be wants to get rid of *her*, permanently.

Put like that, it sounded so fantastic that she was almost tempted to go back to the hotel to wait for Jeff. But the memory of those awful lines haunted her mind like ghosts of dead love.

She went out of the hotel and crossed the street just a blur in the ever deepening fog. The Powell Street car jangled to a stop, and she climbed aboard. She was reminded of her ride with Jeff, on this same car. Was that a million years ago?

She got off mechanically at the right stop, and walked up the steep steps, and all the time she kept listening for the footsteps following behind her. But they never were there when she stopped to listen, fearfully, from time to time.

The foghorn was baying mournfully as she went into the apartment house. She didn't see any light in Mrs. Bates' apartment as she went racing up the stairs.

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Now that she was home, she didn't know why she had come. She hadn't been thinking very straight. Her one idea had been to put as much space between herself and the hotel as possible.

She went into her apartment, closing and locking the door behind her, but first she had snapped on the light and looked around. No one! She drew a long breath of relief.

She nervously prowled around the apartment, before taking off her coat and hat.

Jeff was either Jim Carrington or his brother. He had been after revenge all the time.

No. That didn't ring true at all! Jeff wasn't like that. Jeff was straightforward and honest and—and true. He loved her!

The echo of his voice over the telephone telling her how much he loved her, came back like a sharp stab of pain to her heart.

She thought: I was a fool to rush off like that! I should have insisted that we stay in the hotel lobby where people were, to talk things out. I should have demanded an explanation from Jeff.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

"Because I Love You!"

ALL AT ONCE she smelled that odor of ashes and solder and cleaning fluid which was mixed up with Cleever, in her mind. She frowned. Then she remembered that Derry Tilford had told her that the handyman was in the apartment with Mrs. Bates, fixing the windows.

She decided to open the window and air the place.

She crossed the room, and it was then that she saw him.

He was in her bedroom, waiting for her. *Cleever*. But somehow he didn't look familiar at first. She realized why. He still was wearing the baggy, worn trousers and the greasy coat and dingy shirt. The familiar box of tools was at his feet. But Cleever's face was washed. He no longer looked made up for a minstrel show.

Linette recognized him immediately. She thought, with a great surge of thankfulness: How could I ever have been fool enough to think Jeff was Jim Carrington! *Cleever* is! If I'd even given the handyman a second glance, I'd have known long ago that he was Jim Carrington.

He got up and, moving in that swift, soft-footed fashion of his, stood against the door. He said in a querulous voice, "I thought, Lyn, that I gave you a bad enough beating to put you in the hospital for a long, long time! But here you are, well and not marred at all by the sink-plunger I pulled across your beautiful, lying face. I can't understand that."

Linette thought, with a sinking heart that Derry's information was right, all the way. Jim Carrington was mentally unbalanced. He couldn't distinguish between her and Lyn, and yet he had, when he lived next door.

She tried to explain things to him. "I'm Linette. My cousin, Lyn is the one who caused all your unhappiness. You did beat her up! She's in the hospital. I'm not the one at all!"

He said in a curiously stubborn way, "The minute they let me out of the sanitarium I looked for you. I didn't think it would be so easy. I knew you were in San Francisco. It was from here that you wrote that horrible letter to me. Remember? The letter where you said you never had loved me and you just were having fun . . . Fun—And my lovely Felice *died*!"

A look of such ferocity came into his face that Linete took an involuntary step backward.

She said desperately, "It wasn't I. I never wrote you a letter in my life!"

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It wasn't any use. He had a fixed idea in his head. He was going to get his revenge. Lyn or Linette. It was all the same to him. In his mixed-up mind they were one woman. The girl who had fascinated and ensnared him till he had forgotten his marriage vows.

Linette realized all that in a lightning-like flash of intuition. The man was as dangerous as a coiled rattlesnake, and she'd have to keep him talking. She remembered that people like him love to tell how smart they were.

She gasped out, "Why did you follow me and leave notes around everywhere and—and things?"

He said, "It was easy to find your name in the telephone book. I came here and Mrs. Bates thought I wanted a job as a janitor and I grabbed the chance to stay where I could study you and figure how to frighten you best." Then he added, "A man brought a play to the sanitarium for me to read. He wanted my permission to have the play acted. I read that play. It gave me some of my best ideas."

"Oh!" Linette said, and again she felt a surge of thankfulness that Jeff hadn't been involved in any way, except by pure chance.

She thought: Even if this madman kills me, I'd rather have it like that, than to have had Jeff unworthy.

"I HIRED a lot of people," the man was saying in a proud way. "It took all the money I had. But it was worth it. They all thought it was just a joke. That woman in the train for instance. And the man with the newspaper. Oh, I've made you suffer as my poor Felice suffered!"

Linette made one final attempt to make him understand. "I'm not the one who caused all the trouble! Don't you remember, Mr. Carrington? Aunt Hester had *two* nieces."

He said, "Mr. Carrington. He's dead. I killed him. The bullet didn't hit right but it killed him just the same. I'm a man named Cleever and I'm going to kill you for what you did to my Felice! I'm going to throw little sharp knives at you—till you're dead. I have lots of little sharp knives here in my toolbox hidden under this greasy rag. They belong to a game. Instead of darts, you throw little sharp knives into a board! But I'm going to throw them into you. I've been practicing."

The horror which had held her bound, suddenly disappeared. She ran into the bedroom slamming the door behind her. The door immediately sprang open and when she tried to turn the knob, the knob came off in her hand!

His voice drifted to her. "I'm a handyman. Remember? There's no way for you to barricade yourself in that room. The door will fall down, presently. So it's no protection at all to you. And I'm staying by *this* door, which is the only way out!"

Linette thought desperately of Jeff. Maybe he was still at the office.

She snatched up the phone. No dial tone came from it. She dialed operator with a shaking finger. Nothing happened. The hateful voice of the man who wanted revenge, came to her ears from the other room. "I cut the phone. It's dead. Just as you will be, soon!"

Linette closed her eyes and swayed a little. She thought: *Oh, Jeff, Jeff, why did I ever doubt you? Oh, Jeff, help me now. Jeff!*

Was it her imagination that someone was tapping at the window? She whirled around.

FOR A DAZED MOMENT she thought she must be seeing a mirage. Jeff was out there, a dark blur in the fog. As she stood motionless he tapped again, softly but insistently.

She raced to the window, unlatching it and throwing it wide. Jeff slid into the room with a backward grimace at the

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narrow ledge on which he'd been standing.

Linette cried, "Oh, Jeff, Jeff! It's really *you*! Oh, how did you know I needed you so much. Oh, Jeff!" She clung to him, her shaking hands clasped round his neck.

He said, "Sh! darling. I've got to get those knives away from that madman."

Linette gasped, "How did you know he was guarding that door?"

"I took a leaf from Mrs. Bates' book. I snooped!" Jeff grinned. "When I heard what he was saying, I raced out and climbed up the fire escape and crawled along the ledge to your bedroom. I was sure you'd make for the telephone sooner or later. Oh, oh! He's heard me! Here he comes. Keep behind that door."

But as the door fell in a horde of blue-coated men swarmed into the living room, and marched off with an unexpectedly docile Jim Carrington. He seemed to think he *had* killed Linette and so had revenged himself for his wife's death. He went off quite peacefully.

Linette, sobbing in Jeff's arms, whispered, "Why did the police come?"

"I called them when I couldn't get you at the hotel. I told them to come here. Somehow, I had a hunch you were in danger, darling." He lifted her chin with his forefinger. "Now will you tell me, cupcake, why the heck you ran away from me? When I got the house dick to open the door of that suite and saw your suitcase and the play there and you gone . . . Well, I about cashed in my chips on the spot!"

Linette whispered, "Oh, Jeff, I'm so ashamed! I didn't know who was doing all this—this frightening, and when I read the play and the hero proposed just the way you did and—and asked her to elope with him on the one o'clock plane, and there wasn't any one o'clock plane, why . . ."

He burst out laughing. "Angel, there *is* a one o'clock plane. Saturday only."

Linette said, "The girl at the information desk told me there was no one o'clock. And when the man in your play killed the girl—"

"Killed the girl?" He said. "Linette, what are you talking about? I didn't have the man in my play kill the girl! He got sorry for her at the last minute and married the girl! Just like I'm going to do. If we make that plane."

"Let's run fast to your car, and drive fast to the airport," Linette said breathlessly. "Because from now on, I'm going to be your shadow, darling. And I'd much rather we made it legal."

He took her into his arms again. He said huskily, "Don't worry about me making it legal, angleface. I'm marrying you tonight if we have to take a plane to Peru, or maybe the South Pole. But we're finding us a minister somewhere and we're getting married. Because I love you."

Linette sighed. She whispered, "It's wonderful not to be afraid any longer, darling."

Their lips met in a kiss that threatened to last forever. Outside the foghorn moaned, but to Linette it sounded like the merry chime of wedding bells.

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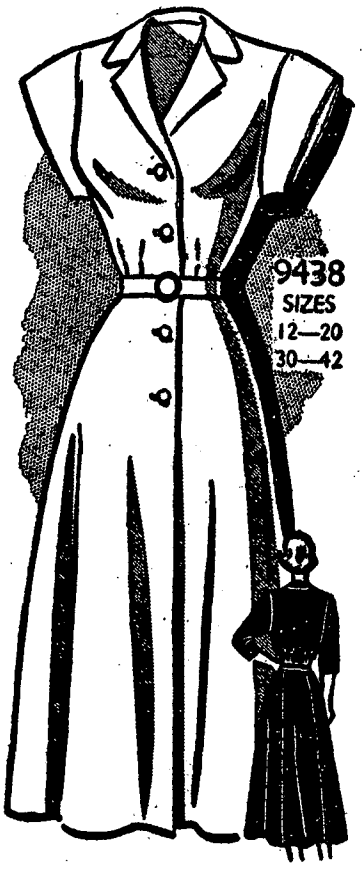

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Swing Your Partner

By KYLE NEWSOM

. . . and don't dare rest
Till you've caught the one you love the best!

MUSIC WAS COMING from the marble pavilion that topped a grassy hill in Cheesman Park and looked like the top of a wedding cake. Joan Porter, strolling toward the pavilion in the June sunshine, wished she hadn't thought of wedding cakes at all. She wouldn't be having one, ever. Tomorrow when she took the ten o'clock train home she'd automatically become a spinster. Small town school teachers did.

And, she thought, rebelling, she was too young, at nineteen, to be a spinster automatically. She was pretty, with great gray eyes, and brown hair that had red in it if you looked at it just right. But, tomorrow, her month in Denver at the Teachers' Conference would be over, and she hadn't fallen in love. She'd had dates, of course, dozens of them, but not with the kind of young man she had in mind.

"Young Lochinvar," she described him to herself, half out loud. "Tall and dark and dashing."

None of those young men she'd had dates with could be thought of as young Lochinvars. They were high school principals, mostly, or teachers of History and Physical Ed. They were bespectacled and business-suited, and the only thing they ever dashed for was the Thirteenth Avenue bus.

"No, thank you," and "Thank you, but I'll be too busy packing," Joan had said when they'd called her this morning for dates tonight.

But the packing had taken fifteen minutes—a country school teacher doesn't need many clothes—and buying her train ticket downtown had taken exactly ten. So here she was at half past noon, strolling in the park on her last day in the city, with nothing to do until midnight. Not, of course, that she'd stay out until then. Country school teachers didn't. Or maybe *shouldn't* was the proper word.

The music from the pavilion was louder now, as she approached, and it wasn't canned, as she'd expected. It was real live, Western music, fiddles and six-string guitars, and an accordion to carry the melody stubbornly when the violins took off. And the pavilion—as big as a Kansas barn back home, Joan thought—was filled with couples dancing, whirling like the bright stones in a kaleidoscope and falling into patterns momentarily.

"Square dancing!" Joan breathed. "Square dancing in a marble pavilion in a city park! I wish I had a partner and a dress and a bow in my hair . . ."

She knew all the steps, of course, the *Varsoviana, allemande left.* There were square dances in Kansas, too, but not in marble pavilions, outdoors in the sun, not with fiddlers from big-name bands, not with a dance caller as professional as this. And the men, in Kansas, wore their work

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clothes, the girls their cottons, much-washed. Here the men had on cowboy boots and silk shirts, the girls bright dresses with long, full skirts, made of dimity and dotted-swiss and challis.

Joan, leaning against one of the white pillars, dreamed. Here she would come on summer evenings with young Lochinvar. They'd dance in the moonlight on the marble floor, they'd *allemande* and *promenade* and swing your partner. And then, maybe, they'd kiss. And he'd be tall and dark and dashing.

THE MUSIC STOPPED, and Joan opened her dreaming gray eyes. Young Lochinvar was standing in front of her, tall in the afternoon sun. Smiling, Joan tried to blink him away, hallucination that he was.

But he wouldn't go. He was real, corporeal. He actually had a voice of his own, even if it was a bit deeper than most men's.

"Can you square dance?" he said. "I need a partner for the next reel."

Joan nodded her head, and then she shook it, violently. "I haven't a dress," she mourned. "And I couldn't dance in high-heeled shoes."

Lochinvar grinned, his teeth as white as she had always expected. "Take 'em off," he said. "And your dress has a full skirt, even if it's short. I like you in green."

Unfastening her high-heeled white slippers, Joan laughed. "You've never seen me in anything else," she pointed out. "In fact, you've never seen me at all."

Lochinvar's eyes darkened with mystery. "Ah, but I have," he said. "I've seen you in a powder blue suit, in white blouses, in a pink sweater and a gray skirt."

Joan gasped. She did have all those things, but she had never, but never, seen this dashing young man in the red silk shirt.

"I dream true," he laughed. "Maybe you do too. Come, let's dance."

And it was true, her dreaming, Joan thought, except that there was sunshine instead of moonlight in the pavilion, and they weren't alone. But he danced expertly, and at the end of the reel he swung her high in the air and brought her down gently, with a light, airborne kiss as she slipped from his arms. The other couples kissed, too, so it was all right. It probably had no significance, except as part of the dance.

"This is a rehearsal," Lochinvar explained. "The Tri-County Square Dance Contest is tonight."

Joan linked her arm through his while they waited for the next dance to begin. Wasn't it wonderful that she hadn't made a date for tonight? Now she could beg, borrow, or buy a beautiful square dance dress—the stores would be open till five—and some flat slippers, and a bow for her hair. Green, of course, so he'd say again, "I love you in green." Or had he said "like?"

They might even win, she thought as she waited for the fiddlers to finish their tuning up. Lochinvar—Pete Duncan, he'd said his name really was—was by far the best dancer among the men, and Joan hadn't been going to Kansas square dances all her nineteen years for nothing. She and Pete would show these Colorado dancers a swing or two.

"The prize is a silver loving cup," Pete said. "Nice things, loving cups, except that Diane and I can't agree what to do with it, if we win. Diane wants it for the mantel in her father's mountain cabin, and I want to give it back to the committee and make the contest a yearly thing."

"I—I see." Joan hadn't known before that words could come out so small, so faint and far away, as if she hadn't said them herself. He had a partner, then, Diane Somebody, and she simply hadn't come to the rehearsal this afternoon, for

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one reason, or six. It didn't matter.

"I—I've got to be getting home," Joan murmured, just as the music began, with the caller's voice clear above it:

Now even couple East, odd couple West,
Then swing the girl you love the best—

And there was no getting away from Pete's strong arms. With feather-light feet she followed him, wondering that her heart didn't weigh her down. No dress, no flat-heeled slippers, no bow in her hair. No silver loving cup, no—no moonlighted kiss. It had been ridiculous, really, to believe this man was her Lochinvar. His hair wasn't dark enough, after all, and it grew to a V. The dream Lochinvar's never had.

When the music stopped, abruptly, she pulled her hands from his, and fled, scooping up her shoes from beside the pillar, running swiftly in her stockinged feet across the green park grass. The way to end a dream, she knew, was to wake up immediately, and not try to go on dreaming. Why bother, when the dream suddenly included a girl named Diane?

BUT PETE was swifter at running. There were still acres of park to cross, and she was breathless, when he caught her and swung her around and smiled down into her sunny face.

"That wasn't nice," he chided her. "You're supposed to tell me your name and telephone number." He laughed. "Or at least your name. And I'm supposed to take you to lunch."

She couldn't resist saying it, haughtily. "Take your Diane." Then she tried to turn her back and walk away.

But Pete would have none of her anger. The cowboy boots strode right along beside her, the red silk shirt elbowed her bare arm. "I'm not married to Diane," he said, "or even engaged. I just thought she was the best square dancer in town. And it's you I want to take to lunch. It's perfectly proper. We've met before." He added, quickly, "In our dreams, that is."

She agreed, finally. There was no harm in having lunch with him, and it would make her last afternoon pass more quickly. She certainly, though, wouldn't tell him her last name of her address or her telephone number.

"Parker?" he guessed, as they came to a side street with a restaurant sign toward the end of the block. "Richards? Prescott? McGillicuddy? No, it wouldn't be that. Forrest? Jones? Smith? Porter?"

Astonished gray eyes looked up to his.

"Porter," he nodded. "Of course it is! Joan Porter. I told you I could dream true. And isn't Peter Duncan the name you had in mind for me?"

She nodded, unwillingly. But of course it was. It did sound so familiar, as if it had always been her Lochinvar's name. Diane's Lochinvar, she must continue to remind herself.

The restaurant was small and dim and cozy, with surprisingly good food. They were late for lunch, so that the place was empty except for one solicitous waiter who didn't seem a bit bewildered by sombreros and red silk shirts. Pete ordered wine, too, and toasted Joan gaily, "To your dark red hair."

Joan smiled at that, delightedly. The bespectacled, business-suited principals and teachers of History and Physical Ed. seldom noticed that her hair wasn't just plain brown. But Pete had noticed; Pete had looked at it just right to see the red in it.

"Tell me about you," she said when the dessert and coffee came. "Tell me about rodeos and ranches and riding—"

His dark, questioning eyes smiled after a moment. "I haven't been home for months," he said, "but I'll tell you about it. It's in New Mexico, a ranch on the Rio Grande . . ."

While he talked, then, Joan found herself dreaming again. She and Pete were

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married—her ring was one of those strange blue stones set in Indian silver—and they lived at his ranch, in a cool, spacious 'dobe house with rafters and a red tile roof. Every evening they rode together, galloping across the desert, slowing their horses when they came to the river bank, finally tethering them so that she and Pete could watch the wonderful Western sunset, Joan in the strong circle of his arms.

Through the dusk, of course, they'd ride home slowly, laughing, leaning across the horses' manes to kiss. There'd be a fireplace burning, then, and some of that funny drink called *tequila,* and Joan would wear sandals and a peasant skirt and a blouse that left her shoulders bare. Pete would smile across the dinner table in the candlelight and say, "How beautiful you are!" And she might recite to him, shyly, sweetly:

Young Lochinvar has come out of the West;
Of all the wild horsemen his steed is the best.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war—

"But Diane doesn't like it very much."

The dream was ended. There came Diane again. Picking up her white purse, Joan slid from the booth, managing a friendly smile. "It's been fun," she said. "But I really have to be going. I hope you win the contest tonight. 'Bye."

His detaining hand was reaching out, but she hurried, before he could pay the check or untangle his long legs from under the table. There was no point in remaining, in hearing more about Diane. Imagine a girl who wouldn't like a ranch in New Mexico, on the Rio Grande! Imagine not wanting whatever Pete wanted! Imagine never seeing him again!

BUT SHE WOULDN'T see him again, of course. It was four in the afternoon, now, and Joan decided she would walk downtown and shop a bit and have dinner in that Mexican place and perhaps go to an early show. Tomorrow, at ten, she'd be boarding the train for her Kansas hometown. Tomorrow she'd be resigned to schoolteacherhood, spinsterhood, and loneliness. No more dreaming. No more Pete.

It was strange, though, how she went straight to the dress department of the town's biggest store. "Do you have square dance dresses?" she asked the gray-haired saleswoman. "Green, with ruffle and a full, full skirt? "

It was perfect, the one she bought, pale green with flowers sprinkled all over it. Then to the shoe department for slippers like a little girl's, black patent leather with straps. Then the ribbon counter, and enough green satin to make a bewitching bow. And she was riding home on the Thirteenth Avenue bus before she began wondering what on earth she would ever do with the things. She wouldn't have time for square dancing, back home in Kansas. She'd have themes to correct—fifth-grade themes, not even written in ink.

At her Pearl Street rooming house, she unwrapped the dress, the slippers, the ribbon, and tried them on. Her waist looked about eighteen inches around, and the bow brought out the red in her hair. Pete should see her now, she thought wistfully. Maybe he'd think she was prettier than his Diane.

Maybe he'd telephone. She found herself listening, tensely, and it was nearly eight o'clock before she remembered that he didn't know her number, and he couldn't even be sure of her last name. Smiling at her own foolishness, Joan started to take off the flowery green dress. And then the phone did ring.

"Miss Porter!" her landlady called up the stair. "Miss Porter! Telephone! It's a man!"

The black slippers hardly touched the stairs as Joan ran down. And it was Pete. His voice—deeper than most men's—was recognizable instantly.

"Diane hasn't shown up," he said, "and

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the dancing is about to begin. Could you come? I can't drop out or it would ruin some of the squares. Joan . . . please."

She'd been meaning to refuse. Let him learn, right now how undependable his Diane was. Let somebody else win the contest and the silver loving cup. But that last word, that *please,* that tender use of her name, convinced her.

"I'll come," she said, "but I'm ten blocks from the Park. I'll—I'll get a taxi, and you make them wait to begin."

It was magic, of course, part of dreaming true, that a taxi was waiting at the curb. "Most natural thing in the world," the driver said when she praised him for it. "A guy has to stop somewhere and smoke a cigarette. Can't cruise around empty all the time."

The park pavilion was brilliant with light, like a lovely Greek temple, like the top tier on a wedding cake. Thousands of people had come to see the contest, and they were seated, fanlike, on the grass, the girls' skirts moth-white in the darkness, the hundreds of cigarettes like red fireflies.

And the dancing hadn't begun, Joan saw thankfully, though the squares were forming and the fiddles tuning up. The tallest young man, in the brightest red shirt, would be Pete, and she found him easily.

There was no time to talk, but the white gleam of his smile thanked her for coming, and he murmured against her hair, "How beautiful you look!"

"What happened to Diane?" she asked him between the dances, while the audience applauded and the judges made their notes.

His fleeting frown told more than he said. "She's—well, she's unpredictable."

"I am too," Joan laughed, ruefully. "I predicted I'd never see you again, but here I am. And I—I dream too much."

Pete's arms were reaching out. "You can't," he said gently. "Nobody can. Every statue, every painting, every poem is somebody's dream come true. Don't stop dreaming, Joan."

SHE'D have to stop, she ordered herself, as the evening went on. Pete's arms were becoming too familiar, too dear, Pete's smile, Pete's voice, the dark V of his hair. She'd have to stop dreaming tomorrow at ten o'clock, and she ought to stop now. This was too much like heaven, this breathless, beautiful dance, and a girl might never want to wake up. Or, waking up, she might break her bewildered heart.

The waltz, the polka, the Varsoviana, the Grand Promenade. Then, too soon, it was nearly midnight, and the caller was shouting:

Now swing her here and swing her there,
Then treat your honey to a nice soft chair!

The judges were conferring, nodding their heads, then shaking them. Finally one of them spoke over the loud speaker.

"Ladies and gentlemen—the club prize is awarded to Jefferson County!"

He waited, patiently, until the applause died down, and then, holding the shining silver loving cup, he announced, "First prize for couples—Mr. Peter Duncan and his lovely lady, Miss Diane Overstreet!"

Diane again! Joan felt her eyes sting with sudden, discouraged tears. She had danced her lightest, she had worn her pretty green dress, she had won. But the credit was Diane's.

Joan tried, then, to pull her hand from Pete's, but he bent nearer.

"There wasn't time to tell the judges you were substituting," he explained. "I'll tell them now and they can make the announcement. You're the best dancer in the Rocky Mountains, darling."

He had called her *darling.* He had granted she was a better dancer than Diane. "Don't bother," she said, her smile like the sun after showers. "Just so we

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won—just so we can give the cup back to the committee for next year."

Pete grinned. "I knew you'd want to do that," he approved. Then he was leading her toward the microphone, smiling beside her while the judges made their compliments, while the news photographers exploded their flash bulbs. Crowds clustered around, admiring the silver cup in Joan's arms, admiring Joan.

And then slim hands reached out and grasped the cup and took it from Joan's fingers. "It's mine, I believe," an arrogant voice said.

JOAN'S SMALL FACE whitened with fury. Here was Diane in the flesh, come to claim what she hadn't won, what wasn't rightfully hers. And so sure that Joan wouldn't make a scene about it! Diane was claiming Pete, too, slipping her arm through his, standing beside him, tall and golden-haired and beautiful. Her dress was blue, and there was a knot of blue cornflowers in her hair.

"You'll forgive me for being late, won't you, Petey?" she was saying confidently, her blue eyes narrowing now and then as she looked at Joan. "And," Diane went on, "isn't this a good time to announce our engagement, with photographers here and everything?"

Joan didn't even wait to hear Pete's answer. She backed away, into the crowd, and was obscured, and then she ran from the pavilion to the gravelled circle where there might be a taxicab.

There was one, a sedan with the door open, the light on; a yellow taxicab that looked like a pumpkin with a candle inside. But, just a few hours ago, Joan thought, her taxi had been a fairy coach. Now it was a pumpkin again, and Cinderella must go home alone from the ball.

And Pete had lied to her, she thought sleeplessly all that night. He had said, so clearly, "I'm not engaged to Diane." But when Diane had suggested that they announce their engagement, no quick words of denial had come from his lips. He had simply stood there, looking handsome . . . and a bit surprised.

She'd forget him, though, she assured herself. It might take all year, and a million fifth-grade themes, but she would forget him; forget that he had ever seemed like Lochinvar. Diane the undependable had won, after all, won the silver loving cup, and Pete, and the ranch on the Rio Grande.

At ten minutes of ten in the next morning Joan was waiting in the vaulted Union Station for her train to be called. Her month in the city was over, her Teachers' Conference diploma in her purse. She would have a summer at home on her father's farm, and then the fifth grade at the country school, and automatic spinsterhood. She'd have to do a lot of dreaming, she decided, to make up for such a dull existence. But she wouldn't dream of Pete. She wouldn't dream of that 'dobe house with a red tile roof, or of a baker's dozen of babies of her own, all looking exactly like Pete.

The train was called, and she picked up both bags and started for the ramp.

When two strong, masculine hands reached for the suitcases, she shook her head. "No porter, thank you."

Then she looked up, and her gray eyes widened. This was no porter, this business-suited, bespectacled young man. He was vaguely familiar, tall and dark, his hair growing on his forehead in a V. He was Pete!

JOAN SET her lovely mouth grimly. "And you're a fraud, too," she said, her voice like ice. "There probably isn't any ranch on the Rio Grande, or any palominos, or any house with a red tile roof. Go back to your Diane and—and stay out of my dreams!"

She marched on, purposefuly, but he kept step beside her. He had pocketed the

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spectacles, but not until she recalled where she had seen him in them before. He had attended the Teachers' Conference, too; all the sessions at the local university. He probably taught History or Physical Ed. And no wonder he had known her name and her wardrobe! And he had pretended he was dreaming true!

"You—you lied to me," she accused him. "You masqueraded in a sombrero and a red silk shirt! You—you let me fall in love with you, but you were engaged all the time to Diane! And you let her take the credit for winning the square dance contest. But I—I don't love you! Not one bit."

Her bags were being lifted aboard by the conductor, and Pete, for no reason that he could see, was handing a newspaper to her.

She brandished it in his face. "Go back to your Diane!" she ordered him.

He started to say something, something about love, but the train wheels were turning and the conductor was scooping her aboard. From her dusty window, she tried, unhappily, to see Pete, but he was gone. Maybe she had been too hasty, maybe she should have given him a chance to explain.

And why had he given her this newspaper? As the train moved through the suburbs, she opened it, disinterestedly. And then she sat up very straight, her gray eyes stinging again with sudden, guilty tears, when a headline caught her eye:

CUPID MIXED UP AT SQUARE-DANCE CONTEST

New Mexico Rancher's Son Denies Engagement

The article described the ranch on the Rio Grande just as Pete had. Joan's eyes fairly popped as she read on:

> Mr. Duncan has been attending the annual Teacher's Conference in order to further his pet project of better schooling for the Indians of the Southwest. It has been rumored that Miss Diane Overstreet objected to ranch life . . .

And Miss Joan Porter had been so wrong, Joan admitted dismally. But perhaps it wasn't too late. Perhaps she could leave the train at the first stop and take a taxi—a fairy coach it would be again—back to Pete. She could tell him she loved ranch life. She could tell him she loved *him.*

The train gathered speed, though, and the conductor, when she found him in the next car, informed her that the first stop was a hundred miles on. Back through the swaying aisle she went, sadly, and she bumped, head-on, into a tall young man. He had on a sombrero and a red silk shirt.

"Pete!" Joan sighed with relief.

He had a compartment and he led her, laughing, into it. "You didn't think I'd let you get away, did you?" he said. "You can help me with the Indian schools. You can ride my palomino mare named Platinum. You can marry me, in fact, when we get to your home town. And then we'll go live happily ever after in New Mexico."

"It sounds wonderful," Joan said. "It sounds like a dream come true. And to think it all happened because of a square dance in the Park!"

Pete's arms were reaching out, and he was tall and dark and dashing, just like Lochinvar.

"Now kiss the girl you love the best," he quoted from the square dance call.

And then he did.

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No Time For Love

By VIRGINIA NIELSEN

WHEN THE KNOCK sounded on their dressing room door that night after the midnight show, Sue Cloverly knew what was going to happen. The strong sense of danger that had come to her out there on the dance floor returned, freezing her to her chair, one ballet slipper in her hand.

It was Lora, at the mirror, who called, "Come in!"

Jacques Boudreau, swarthy owner of the Derniere Cri, the shabby little French Quarter night club where their sister act was booked, opened the door. His smile showed a row of small pointed teeth, very white.

"You girls feel like having a drink with some friends of mine?" he asked.

Sue knew who one of his friends was. It was the thin, dark, moody man who had sat at a table on the edge of the dance floor and watched Lora dance, watched her too closely, with eyes too wise and too brilliant.

All evening long he had stared at her sister. Only once had his eyes met Sue's—and he had been as aware as she of the antagonism that sparked between them then. It had amused him. If anything, it had increased his interest in Lora.

Sue spoke up swiftly, nagged by the apprehension that had been mounting steadily for the past hour. "Thanks, Jacques, but it's too hot tonight. Some other time?"

Lora broke in petulantly, "Oh, Sue, please, let's do! You never want to meet anyone!"

Jacques looked from one girl to the other with a comprehending smile, still showing his teeth. It was always this way, his worldly eyes seemed to say; the small, pretty girls had to have a *duenna,* an older sister or a mother—it was all the same! Someone to try to keep the men away.

Sue read it all in his eyes, without resentment. It was true. She was not as pretty as Lora. She was a little older. She was also very much stronger in every way, and Lora and the act that was their livelihood were her responsibility.

It was strange, Sue sometimes thought, that she and Lora could look so much alike that sometimes they were taken for twins, and still Lora could be so much more attractive.

They had the same hair, a burnished red-gold shade distinctively their own. Their eyes were the same mahogany brown. Even their features were nearly the same, except that on Lora they were small and petite while Sue's nose and chin and cheekbones were all just a little bit larger, a little bit longer.

A caricature she called herself sometimes in a rare flash of bitterness. She was even taller than Lora by three inches. The all-over result was that Lora had a small, round soft prettiness that always appealed to men.

She didn't know about love until the man who challenged her heart taught her a strange lesson.

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And Sue's role in life seemed to be chasing the men away, for men were a definite threat to the Act; and the Act was everything to Sue:

Of course it was everything to Lora, too, Sue added hastily in her thoughts. Lora was the real dancer of the two. Yet she could never have got a booking alone. She was too soft. She had the talent and Sue had the grim determination necessary to battle ahead in show business.

Lora was a toe-dancer. She was good enough so that people watched her when the two danced. Few in their audience noticed that Sue followed Lora's routines flat on her heel-less slippers. It was a neat trick that made them look exactly the some height . . . It was a team that no mere man was going to break up!

TONIGHT LORA WAS IN a rebellious mood. Sue recognized it instantly. She didn't want Lora to go by herself to meet the thin, dark man, so she gave in gracefully.

"Okay, then. Just one drink."

"Come out when you've changed," Jacques said, "and I'll introduce you to my friends."

There were four men at the table, all workers from the Louisiana oil fields, up for a night of play in New Orleans. Sue had no time for any of them but the one Jacques introduced as Greg Archer. The others didn't matter.

She studied his thin dark face with its moody lines and his dark eyes returned her searching gaze with a long appraising stare of their own. There was a challenge in that look. Already he seemed to have sensed that she was his enemy.

After that one look he devoted himself to Lora, ignoring her. Sue's strange uneasiness deepened. The music was loud and he and Lora put their heads together in order to be able to hear each other. From across the table Sue watched their absorbed interested faces and fumed inwardly because she could not hear what they were saying.

In a few moments they got up to dance. One of the other men asked Sue and she accepted, more to be able to follow and watch Greg and Lora than because she wanted to dance.

Greg was tall—tall enough even for her, Sue couldn't help thinking. Lora was a naturally graceful dancer, of course, and just the right size to fit into a man's arms. Any man would enjoy dancing with her.

As for Lora, she looked up at Greg with an animation Sue had not seen on her face for months. And when the lights lowered and the orchestra slid into a waltz, she laid her head on Greg's shoulder with a naturalness that struck cold fear to Sue's heart.

When all four returned to the table, Sue suggested to Lora that they had better call it a night so they could get some sleep.

Lora pouted and said, "Don't be a wet blanket, Sue! Tomorrow is Sunday." They had no show on Sunday.

Greg Archer gave Sue a level look. "We were talking of going to the Belvedere for an hour or so, but we can drop you off first if you don't want to go along."

Sue could feel the blood rising to her face. *Oh, no you don't!* she thought.

"I wouldn't think of spoiling the party!" she exclaimed quickly. "After all, it's been a long time since we played a little."

Lora gave her sister a dazzlingly grateful smile, but when she met Greg's eyes Sue knew he wasn't fooled. His gaze measured her the way a man measures an opponent. It seemed to say, *I know your strength, but I am strong, too.*

When the two extra men said goodnight, Greg and Lora, and Sue and her escort, Bill, taxied to the hotel where the dancing lasted until two.

It was after they were seated at a table there, that Greg asked Sue to dance. Tall

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as he was, Sue faced him almost eye to eye. Lora had put her head lightly on his shoulder, but he and Sue danced as two fighters circle, wary and watchful. There was a peculiar exhilaration in it.

Greg said at last, "Why do you dislike me?"

Sue smiled a little. "I don't dislike you."

It was true. Actually she liked him better than any man she had ever met. That was what made her so afraid. For she knew Lora could not help liking him, too.

IT WAS AFTER THREE when Greg and Bill left them at the door of their small apartment in the Quarter. Nothing had been said about another date, at least in Sue's hearing, but the feeling of uneasiness was still with her.

Lora hummed happily as she got ready for bed. Sue pretended to fall asleep immediately, but it was daylight before she actually slept. She went over the whole evening from the time she had first noticed Greg Archer at his floor-side table. Resentfully she rehearsed in detail his every word and look.

He was a threat to the Act and he had to be eliminated. It was up to her, because Lora herself would do nothing but drift. She had always expected Sue to do the thinking for them both. Sue would have to handle this situation, too.

But her planning had the opposite effect from what she had intended. She exhausted herself staying awake so late and slept very late in the morning. When she awakened, Lora was gone.

Sue sprang up and slipped into an emerald satin robe. Now she knew her vague fears of the night before had not been imaginary, for Lora had never before left the apartment without at least telling her, before she met Greg Archer. The attraction between them must be nipped in the bud, she told herself, before it toppled the whole structure she had so carefully built up for hers and Lora's future.

She was still brooding over a cup of coffee and a cigarette in the tiny patio of the apartment when Lora and Greg came in. Lora's eyes were glowing and there was a luminous quality about her smile that hurt and angered Sue. Didn't Lora realize what she was doing?

It was Greg who spoke. "I wanted to take you to breakfast, too, Sue," he said, "but your sister said you were sleeping so soundly she hated to waken you."

There was no triumph in his eyes. They looked at her with that same wary measuring glance, and Sue thought with sudden elation, *He's shrewd enough to know he hasn't won yet!*

"You didn't even hear the telephone when he called, did you?" Lora said gaily. "I thought if you were that tired you'd rather sleep."

Sue stood up and the emerald satin fell in shining folds to her feet, but there was a look in Greg Archer's eyes that momentarily stopped her. It was *admiration!*

She thought cynically, "I must take care he never sees Lora in green." After all, their coloring was identical.

"Can I give you some more coffee?" she asked, and her politeness was like a chill on the friendly easy feeling that was already between them.

Greg refused, and he didn't stay long after that. He had to drive back to the oil fields that afternoon. But before he left he said, "I'll be back up next weekend. Would you girls like to take the pleasure boat up the Mississippi Sunday night?"

Before Sue could think of an excuse, Lora had cried happily, "Oh, that would be fun! I've always wanted to take that trip!"

And again Sue could not let her go alone. Reluctantly, she accepted.

After he had left Lora cried, "Oh, Sue, isn't he wonderful?"

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"What's wonderful about him?" Sue said, trying to keep the sharpness she felt out of her voice. "He's just a man."

"But such a big, strong, handsome man!" she said, hugging herself.

"He's neither big nor strong nor handsome," Sue said disgustedly. "He's thin—"

"Wiry," Lora said, "and Texan. Did you know he's from Texas? I just love Texas men!"

"You just love men," Sue said drily, but her taut worry lessened a little. If Lora could talk that way she was not yet in love with Greg Archer.

There was only one time Lora had fallen in love. That was in the very beginning, before the Act. Of course, that had been just puppy love. Lora was barely seventeen when their mother died, and was going steady with Ted Bracken. Sue was twenty, without a boy friend who was more than a casual date, and full of boundless ambition and a contempt for the small town where they'd grown up.

All the girls had was a thousand dollars and the training their mother had given them. Lora had had dancing lessons and Sue had had piano.

Sue thought back uneasily to that time, knowing that it had been her ambition and determination that had taken the two of them to New York to try to get on the stage. Left to herself, Lora would no doubt have married Ted Bracken and settled down comfortably to raise his family.

Things in New York hadn't gone quite as Sue had planned in the beginning. Lora was to become a star. She would play the piano for her, coach her, manage her. But after long dreary months of failure, when they were on the verge of returning home, an agent had told them he had a spot for a sister dance team. That was when the Act had been born. Surprisingly, it had gone over—not in New York, but on the road, the night club circuit.

Lora had never even given Ted Bracken a thought in the past two or three years, Sue was sure. And in a few more years —who knows? they might be back on Broadway. Or a Hollywood talent scout might see Lora and realize that she could really dance!

Sue said nothing more about Greg, and the next weekend they went on the pleasure cruise with him. Sue was a little surprised when he showed up alone. She had half expected him to bring a friend who would distract her while Greg made love to Lora. But perhaps that would have been too obvious. She eyed him thoughtfully, with new respect.

So they set out on their threesome, the tall dark man between the two red-headed girls. The pleasure boat at the foot of Canal Street was ablaze with lights. An orchestra was playing amidships. After they had strolled around the decks Greg asked them if they wanted to dance.

Sue said quickly, "That's a busman's holiday for us!" and congratulated herself that she had prevented him from taking Lora in his arms under the pretext of dancing.

But she didn't gain any advantage, for they spent the entire cruise on the upper deck which was romantically dark. The night air was warm and languorous and the music floated out across the dark waters of the river, softened and sweetened by distance.

Greg sat between the girls and Sue was sharp-eyed for any stolen caresses, but she saw none. Greg was sharp, too!

The next weekend Greg took them both to Lake Pontchartrain Beach and the following weekend they drove around the lake into the woods to escape the New Orleans heat.

In spite of herself Sue was enjoying the outings. It had been a long hard grind since the beginning of the Act, and for the first time she was relaxing a little.

As for Lora, she took on a sort of glow.

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She was giddily, childishly happy on Sunday, sleepy and rather depressed on Monday, and so jittery toward the end of the week she made Sue nervous.

That weekend when Greg phoned from the oil fields to say he was short of men and could not come in, she burst into tears. That shocked Sue into forcing a showdown.

"Look, Lora," she said brutally, "you're not going to fall in love with that common laborer, are you?"

Lora raised an indignant, tear-streaked face. "Greg's an engineer, and you know it!"

Sue shrugged. "Whatever you call it, it's a dirty job. And it doesn't leave a place in Greg's life for any but party girls."

"How can you say such things!" Lora demanded, shocked. "Hasn't Greg always been perfectly proper—"

"You know what I mean," Sue said. "Marriage isn't in the cards with Greg. It's here today, gone tomorrow, living in shacks or tents. Greg's life is too rugged, too unsettled to ask a woman to share it. Nobody knows that better than Greg. So you'd better get hold of yourself; otherwise you'll just be pounding your head against a stone wall."

Lora tossed her head with a gesture oddly spirited for her. "I don't think being married to Greg would be any more rugged than the one-week stand we've played. If you ask me, I could take it just as well."

"But don't you see, darling?" Sue pleaded with her. "We're past all that now. Look at the way we're set up here, with a nice little apartment and a six-months' run. By changing our routine we might get a spot at one of the other clubs here and stay another six months. We're getting better billing all the time. Eventually we'll land back in New York or Hollywood—"

"I'd chuck it all in a minute if Greg asked me," Lora said.

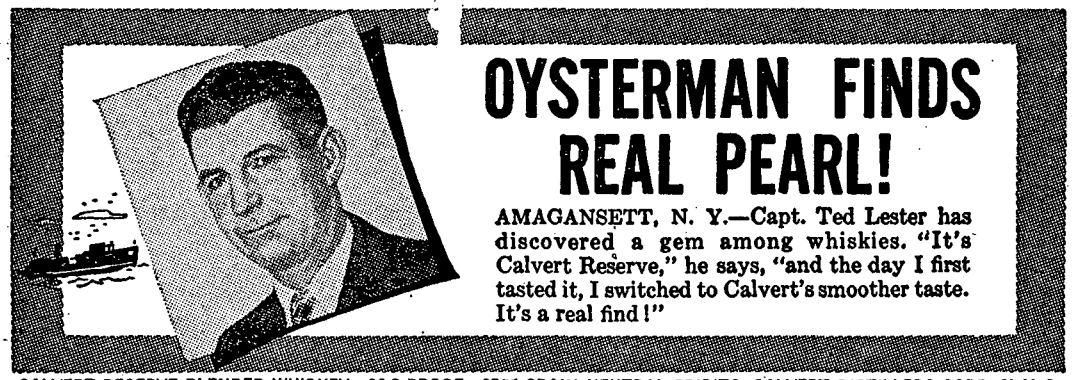
A cold feeling hit the pit of Sue's stomach. This was what she had subconsciously feared.

Lora's face was pale with the effort of asserting herself. "Let me tell you something, Sue. I would have been happier married to Ted Bracken than I've ever been since. I'm not going to turn down a second chance at happiness! If Greg Archer asks me to marry him, I'm going to say yes!"

Sue played her last, her trump card. "And where would that leave me?"

Lora's eyes shifted uncomfortably.

"I'll tell you," Sue said bitterly. "Out on my ear. I can't dance, Lora. You know that. Without you, I don't even belong in show business. Yet I've given the Act every ounce of strength and thought I have. I don't know anything else. There's nothing else I can do."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There was a long silence. Lora's rounded shoulders slumped in defeat. Finally she said, "You win, Sue. The next time Greg comes, you can send him away."

IT WAS THREE WEEKS before Greg could come back. By that time Sue was conscious of a strange new uncertainty . . . she who had always been so sure of herself.

Lora had been acting strangely, quiet and withdrawn. She frequently left the apartment without her sister now. Without hesitation she dressed and got ready to leave the apartment before Greg could arrive that Sunday morning.

Sue said uncertainly, "I'm sure it's the right thing we're doing, baby." But she had the uncomfortable feeling that she had not convinced her sister. She had simply exhausted her.

After Lora left, Sue prowled restlessly through the apartment, straightening ash trays and folding and refolding the Sunday paper. Greg was late. She had asked Lora to give them an hour. But it wouldn't take long to say her say, she thought.

At last the doorbell rang. Lora had left the door unlatched, so Sue said, "Come in," and stood in the center of the room in her green satin hostess gown, waiting.

Greg came in smiling. His smile was the nicest thing about him, she thought. His thin dark face looked moody and a little tired when he was serious, but his smile warmed his whole face. She would miss him, too, Sue admitted, fighting her response to his charm.

His eyes went around the room and she said, "Lora has gone out."

Greg looked at her in an interested watchful way, and Sue felt again the exhilaration of pitting her strength against his. She took a deep breath and went on, "She won't be back, and she won't be in to you ever again, Greg."

His dark eyebrows rose. With surprising calm, he said, "Why, Sue? What's the matter?"

"Because I won't allow it, that's why!" Sue said, somehow unable to resist making it a personal conflict. "I won't have Lora coming to care for you, Greg. I won't have her throwing up the Act just when we're beginning to make some headway. I've worked and struggled and fought too long to see her drop it for a man."

Something glinted in Greg's eyes. Was it anger, she wondered? Or excitement?

"You beautiful idiot!" he said, his voice full and deep. "Didn't you know? You're the one I'm falling in love with!"

Sue drew a sharp breath. Everything seemed to stop in the next moment. Her heart—time—even the street noises were stopped by the roaring in her ears.

"Greg!" she gasped. "Don't—don't joke about this . . ."

"I'm not joking, Sue. I love you."

"But you can't!" she cried. "I thought—Lora—" She was stammering in her wild confusion. Her heart pounded painfully. But it couldn't be, she thought, frantically looking back over the weeks. And she'd thought she was maneuvering to be always included in his invitations.

Greg was smiling at her. She closed her eyes to that smile. It was hurting something deep inside her.

"Why, Sue?" Greg asked her softly. "Why can't I love you?"

"Lora's so much prettier . . ."

He laughed. He had his arms around her now, lightly, preciously. She could not seem to move.

"Don't you know that prettiness alone seldom attracts a man?" he asked her. "Oh, sometimes, briefly—but not deeply. More often it's a look or a gesture or the way a girl carries herself. Some little thing that hints of a quality he's searching for.

"Do you know why I love you, Sue?

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It's because you're strong. Your s.. ngth calls to mine. And the woman who marries me must have it. Following an oil construction engineer isn't a life for a soft woman like Lora."

"Greg!" Sue protested. He wanted *her!* He wanted her to *marry* him, to leave the stage and follow him from oil field to oil field!

"Besides," he said, grasping her shoulders and turning her around to the small, gold-framed mirror, "did you ever take a good look at yourself? Look at the clear sharp lines of your face. There's character and strength in them, just as there's weakness in Lora's prettiness. Lora is you over again, Sue, but slightly blurred and out of focus, even if her features are more conventionally pretty.

"And when they got around to making her, they'd run fresh out of that wonderful will and determination of yours. Why, darling, do you think I don't know who carries the real weight in your act?"

Sue couldn't listen to him. She started to put her hands over her ears. But Greg thought she was going to put her arms around him. He pulled her closer and unaccountably she did what he'd expected.

He kissed her and her whole soul trembled. No man had ever kissed her that way before, and she was totally unprepared for what it did to her. It shook her to her depths.

For the first time Sue understood how a woman could turn her back on anything —fame, money, her family—to follow the man she loved.

"Oh, Greg!" she murmured shakenly against his lips.

She felt a tremor go through his long lean frame and the knowledge that his deepest emotions were stirred by her brief surrender moved her unbearably.

But she could not fall in love simply and naturally as Lora had. Sue had to do it the hard way. All her life she'd been a fighter and now she fought love.

So the danger she had sensed in him that first night had been a personal one! The antagonism she felt had been her unconscious battle against his charm.

She tried to struggle out of his arms, but he held her tightly, smiling that wonderful warm smile of his. She threw back her head and lashed out at him.

"I'll never marry!" she cried harshly. "The Act means more to me than anything else. Do you think I'm going to throw it over to follow you around the country in a tent? Are you that conceited? Well, I'm not going to, do you hear?"

"You won't have to live in a tent, honey," Greg said calmly. "It won't be easy, but it won't be that hard."

She stormed at him, fighting the strange weakness in her heart. She stopped only when she realized that Greg himself was quite relaxed. He was not fighting at all. He was that much stronger than she and he knew it.

She was frightened then. "Greg, let me go!" she cried.

"I'm never going to let you go," he said gently, and kissed her again.

She could not fight against his kisses. Her whole set of values had turned topsy-turvy in those few passionate moments when she responded to his kiss and sensed the thrill of emotion he felt at her surrender. The woman in her had awakened, hungering for a part of living that so far she had successfully ignored.

"Oh, Greg, no," she sobbed, in defeat. "Greg, we can't—"

There was a sound in the doorway, a soft, startled exclamation. They had been so absorbed in each other they had not even heard the door open. Lora stood there, her eyes wide and staring.

SUE FELT THE guilty flush that rose to her cheeks.

"So the Act comes first!" Lora mocked her, in a light hard voice she had never

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before heard from her sister. "You meant you wanted him yourself, didn't you?"

"Lora!" Sue cried. "Let me explain —" But how could she explain that her whole world had turned over since morning?

"Don't bother," Lora said and walked past them into the bedroom.

Sue ran to the door but Greg reached ahead of her. "Let me talk to her."

"You leave her alone!" Sue flared, in guilt and remorse. "She's my sister! This is your fault. You made her love you."

Now she could never have Greg. She couldn't go to him, as long as Lora loved him. Her heart was breaking and her eyes were bright with unshed tears.

Greg grabbed her shoulders and pulled her around to face him. "She's going to be my sister, too," he said. "And let's get this straight now. I haven't made love to her, not any more than I have to you—until this morning. If Lora thinks she's in love with me it's because you've kept her so repressed she was just in a mood for love. Any man's attentions could have set off the fuse."

He dropped a kiss on her startled lips and said, "I've played fair, darling. You can't say I've led her on."

He knocked on the door and said, "Lora!"

For a moment there was no answer. Then they heard her high heels strike the floor as she came swiftly to throw the door open. Sue stared at her in amazement. She was *laughing!*

"Oh, darlings, I'm so happy! I wanted to punish you, Sue, but I'm no good at pretending. And this is the happiest day of my life!"

She threw her arms around them both. There was a letter in her hand. "Come in here and sit down and let me tell you about it."

She led them back to the living room. She sank down on the couch and Greg sat beside her, but Lora stood still."

"Do you remember when we quarreled about Greg, and I promised to let you send him away?" she asked Sue. "I told you I was sorry I hadn't married Ted, and that if Greg asked me to marry him, I would."

Her dark brown eyes went apologetically to Greg's face. "After I thought about it I realized how unfair that would have been to you, Greg. Because when I began thinking about Ted again—he's never been far from my thoughts, really, since we left home—I realized I still loved him and always would. So—I wrote him a letter!"

Sue was staring at her sister. And she had thought she knew Lora so well!

"I didn't want you to know, Sue, so I took a post office box. This morning I found an answer there." Her face colored and she looked prettier than ever. "Oh, Sue—Greg—darlings! He still loves me! He wants me to come back!"

Sue was too shaken to speak. Lora was not in love with Greg! Happiness flooded her. Her eyes met Greg's and the light that leaped between them was almost too dazzling to bear.

"That calls for a celebration," Greg said, and his voice sounded unsteady to her ears. "Champagne, at least! We'll drink a toast—"

"To the death of the Act!" Lora cried happily.

"And to our future," Greg said, his eyes still on Sue's face.

She didn't deserve it, she thought humbly. She murmured, "Oh, Lora, I didn't know!"

I didn't know about love!

"It took a strong man to teach you," Lora said flippantly. She wandered tactfully off toward the kitchen, leaving them alone. And as Sue raised her lips gladly to meet Greg's kiss, she thought how wonderful it was going to be to learn.

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Another Day, Another Darling

By SHELBY STEGER

WHEN LISA JAMES came down to breakfast the first morning home she found her grandmother leaning her curly gray head on one plump hand and gazing out the window, her surprisingly young blue eyes dreamy.

"There's Kirk Valentine," Gran remarked, then glanced accusingly at Lisa's pale face and faintly reddened lids. "So you cried all night, did you? No man's worth ruining your looks over."

"Just half the night. I'm improving." Lisa sipped black coffee, lighted a cigarette, then peered through the curtains. Beyond the hedge, a good looking dark-haired young man sat on the front steps of the white cottage next door, lazily whittling on a stick. He was *very* good looking. If, Lisa thought dourly, you cared for that sort of thing. She didn't.

"Who's Kirk Valentine?" she asked dutifully. Gran loved to gossip.

"Mag Turner cleans house for him. She told me all about him," Gran began eagerly. "He's madly in love with a movie star, for one thing. Used to write for a picture studio at a simply fabulous salary, then gave it up to come here to Corona del Mar to work on a biography of Doña Luisita Guadalupe María Elena Gonzalez.

Lisa was trying hard to forget yesterday's romance, so she was unprepared for the one she met today.

You know—the Spanish woman who was so important in the early history of this part of California."

"Mm-hmm. When I was in high, Henry J.—Mr. Ames used to mention her in State History class." Lisa shrugged. "If this Valentine is such a hot-shot writer, what's he doing out there whittling?"

"Temperament, dear!" Gran seemed astonished that Lisa didn't know. "All artists are temperamental: they depend on inspiration. Mag says Mr. Valentine is in a slump. Glooms and grouches around—Lisa, have some cereal, not just coffee and cigarettes."

"Fooey. On both the cereal and Mr. V.'s slump." Complacently Lisa eyed her gently curved slenderness, clothed just now in russet corduroy shorts and a gold jersey shirt. "If I'd depended on inspiration, I'd never have got to be assistant manager of the Display Department of Taft's Department Store. When I needed a new idea for decorating the store or the windows, did I wait for inspiration? I did not! I just sat at my drawing board and sweated it out."

"I know. You did all the work while your wonderful boss, Don Halleck, was getting himself secretly engaged to Dorcas Taft." Gran snorted daintily. "He wasn't worth all that hard work, Lisa."

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Lisa's great gray eyes went smoky with pain. No, blond, handsome Don hadn't been worth all the grindingly hard work she'd done and he'd taken credit for. At the very first, she'd been after his job. Later, in love with him, she'd basked in his pleasure, his warm compliments, when she handled a difficult assignment without his help. His kisses had been ample reward. Oh, Don Halleck had known how to use her, all right!

Theirs had been an informal engagement, one of those "Someday, darling" affairs. No ring, no announcement. For all that, the numbing pain had been no less that morning when someone, who didn't know Lisa was there, spoke too loudly in the elevator.

"Did you hear? Don Halleck and Dorcas Taft flew to Reno single yesterday and came back married. Now Don's to be a vice-president, if you please! Marrying the Big Boss's daughter is *such* a short-cut! Well, Lisa James certainly worked herself into a splendid marriage for Don, didn't she?"

Lisa left the job flat. Just walked out and, after a couple of weeks during which she cowered wretchedly in her little apartment, face to face with heartbreak, she'd come home to Gran's. She'd stay until she got her bearings . . .

"Jilted," Lisa sighed now. "An ugly little word."

"Pooh!" Gran snorted. "If I were you, I'd meet a new man every day, kiss him, and go on to the next. You'd soon forget you'd been jilted."

"Another day, another darling, hmmm?" Lisa shook her smooth tawny-gold head. "No more men for me, Gran. Not ever. Next time I work myself to death, it'll be for *myself,* not some lazy male."

"You've just lost your nerve. Do you know what to do when you get thrown from a horse?"

"Offhand—no, darling," Lisa giggled.

"You climb back on and gallop away. Like when a pilot crashes, then gets in another plane and zooms off immediately. That way you don't lose your nerve." Gran pointed a plump finger toward the window. "If I were you, I'd climb in my plane, zoom over that hedge, and get my nerve back with Kirk Valentine."

"Ah, but you are not I."

"I wish I were." Gran gazed with approval at Kirk Valentine. "Mag tells me there's a picture of Marvelle Munro, the movie star he's in love with, on his desk. It says *To darling Kirk, with all my love, always—Marvelle.*"

"That brunette toasted marshmallow? It serves him right!" Lisa was not a Marvelle Munro fan.

"You know," Gran murmured, "taking a handsome man away from a movie star would be a wonderfully satisfying thing to do."

"No, you don't!" Abruptly Lisa rose. "Leaving you to your sinister plotting, I shall go for a walk."

"Chatting with him over the hedge once," Gran continued slyly, "I mentioned having a beautiful granddaughter. He didn't seem very interested—but then, who would, with Marvelle Munro on his mind!"

"Who, indeed," Lisa agreed. Wasn't interested, hmm? *Hmm!* Whistling, she sauntered through the front door and she kept on whistling: *Off we go, into the wild blue yonder . . .*

IF HE SPEAKS, thought Lisa smugly as she strolled past Kirk Valentine's rented cottage, I'll just nod coolly and go on. Probably conceited; I won't encourage him . . .

Moody brown eyes gazed briefly through Lisa James and returned to the whittling. *Well!* thought Lisa, her competitive instinct stirring.

"Ah!" Purposefully she leaned on the gate. "Sharpening your pencil, I see."

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He tossed the stick aside, shoved the knife closed and into his pocket. "Nope."

"Gran tells me you're a writer." She smiled dazzlingly. "I'm Lisa James, by the way."

"A moot question." Unfolding his lean legs, he started up the porch steps. "My being a writer, I mean."

Why, the rude thing's going in the house, thought Lisa angrily; I'm being jilted again!

"I just stopped by to say that—" She paused. *To say what?* she wondered. "—to say that I type very well. If you've any typing, I'd be delighted . . ."

Instantly he turned, his tanned face split by a beaming smile. He needed a haircut, Lisa noted; somehow his nose managed to be both straight and hawklike. Faded jeans rode low on his narrow hips; a white tee-shirt was in dazzling contrast to the dark tan of his skin. Yes, handsome. Gran could be right. It might be fun to—

"That's kind of you, Miss James. I hadn't thought of it, but if my notes were put in some decent kind of order, perhaps things wouldn't be so confused. Wait right there a minute." He disappeared within the cottage.

Bright boy, Lisa thought drily—he hadn't thought of having his notes typed. Oh, very bright boy.

In seconds, Kirk Valentine returned with a stack of notebooks, a box of paper.

"A little study will show you how these notes should run chronologically," he told her enthusiastically. "You've got a typewriter, of course?"

Lisa's clear skin turned rosy. Bright girl—she hadn't considered that. If the one she'd practiced high school typing on wasn't still in Gran's shed . . .

"Of course," she said starchily and accepted the notebooks and paper. "When will you want these back?"

"Tomorrow would be fine."

Lisa looked at the stack of work and flinched. "I'll try, Mr. Valentine," she said courageously and marched on home.

"Is my old typewriter in the shed?" she asked her grandmother.

"Why, no, dear." Gran glanced up from her crocheting. "I gave it to the Red Cross some time ago. Why?"

"You!" Lisa gritted her small, even teeth. "You and your plane rides!" She stalked to the telephone . . .

The typewriter delivered by Corona del Mar Office Supplies and Typewriter Rentals was little better than an ancient egg-beater, but by midnight—she ate supper off a tray—Lisa finished bringing order out of the chaos of Kirk Valentine's notes. She pulled a coat on over her slacks and sweater. She'd amaze Kirk by her speed and diligence, and then no more of this nonsense.

The cottage was dark. So, while she slaved for him, he slept! Lisa pounded an angry fist on the door. After an interval, it opened.

"All finished? Swell!" Yawning, Kirk tied the belt of his robe at his lean waist. Lisa could see rumpled pajama legs, slippered feet.

"*So* sorry I woke you. And what did *you* do all day, Mr. Valentine?" she asked sweetly as she thrust the completed work at him.

"Oh, I fished for a while, came home, took a nap, played solitaire, wrote some letters and went to bed. Just couldn't seem to get into a working mood. No inspiration. You know how it is," he finished chummily.

Lisa uttered a muffled sound, turned on her heel and stormed home.

"Going to bed, dear?" Gran called sleepily as Lisa slammed into her room. "Nothing like a hobby to make you sleepy, is there? 'Night."

Hobby! In bed, Lisa punched the pillow, then burrowed into it. Well, maybe it was—this thing of working herself silly while some man took it easy. Oh, bright, *bright* girl!

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When Gran briskly shook her awake, Lisa would have sworn that she'd just closed her eyes, but the bedside clock said nine.

"Kirk!" Gran exclaimed joyously. "He wants you to go swimming."

Lisa groaned. "Good! Maybe I can manage to drown him." She rose and put on a brief jade swim suit, straw sandals, and a white terry beach-skirt. She wouldn't go, except that Kirk hadn't kissed her yet. That was all.

Kirk Valentine swam much too expertly to drown. Anyway, after their swim in the clear blue waters of the bay, they lay sunning themselves on the sugar-white sand and Kirk told Lisa his troubles. All Marvelle Munro's fault. Lisa felt sorry for him.

"I lived in Corona as a kid. Even then the story of Doña Luisita fascinated me," he told her. "She was a great woman, whose history deserves to be written. It was in the back of my mind the whole time I wrote for pictures. Well, the more I talked about it to Marvelle Munro—Marvelle and I used to, uh, see a lot of each other—the more interested she became. It would make a marvelous picture for her, she said. I was feeling sorry for Marvelle; she'd just broken up a romance with some heel who'd sold his book to another studio, after promising Marvelle she'd get to play the part. In a weak moment I promised her I'd write the Doña Luisita story so it would be good film material."

"You're—in love with Marvelle?" Lisa asked. Absurdly, she had to know.

Kirk laughed shortly. "Let's put it this way," he said slowly. "Being in love with Marvelle is like drowning in honey. You want terribly to get out of it, but it has some marvelously sweet moments."

"I see." And why, she wondered emptily, should it matter to her if Kirk was in love with Marvelle?

"Well, when I left the studio, I got to work on the Doña Luisita story, with Marvelle practically breathing down my neck. She insisted I make Luisita one of those passionate madcaps with a rose between her teeth, the kind today's historical novels are full of. But the Doña wasn't that kind. She was a respected wife and mother. She educated the mission Indian children, introduced new ideas into the primitive agricultural and animal husbandry practices of the time." His brown eyes, flecked with gold, were glowing. "She was—oh, she was wonderful!"

"Well, write her that way," Lisa suggested practically.

Kirk groaned. "I can't. I keep seeing her as Marvelle Munro. The result is I can't write the darned thing *either* way."

Lisa trickled warm sand through her fingers. *Maybe* . . . But no, she warned herself, she'd be just asking for work. Work for a man who, like all men, wouldn't appreciate it. She would *not* offer to help.

"Maybe if you dictated it," said Lisa, offering to help. "You—you sound so fond of Doña Luisita. Maybe if you told me about her, the way she really was, I could take it down in shorthand and—"

Kirk rolled over, leaned on an elbow and stared at Lisa in delight. "Lisa James, you angel, you *wouldn't!* I believe that might do it!" He scrambled to his feet, reached a big brown hand to Lisa. "Come on, let's try!"

Oh, dear, thought Lisa despairingly, here I go again . . .

IN A GRAY LINEN dress belted with a sapphire scarf, Lisa skipped down Gran's front steps. She looked, she felt, pretty. As for this foolish little excitement nibbling at her veins, it meant nothing. Kirk Valentine was a likeable dope who needed to be helped out of a temporary jam, that was all. She'd get him out of his slump and forget him.

"Just one thing before we start." Lisa doodled with her pencil on the shorthand

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notebook poised on her knee. "I'm glad to help you, but only if you'll promise to work. Hard. The only way to get something done is *do* it. So—no swimming, no whittling, no temperament. No waiting for inspiration."

"Shucks, I'm all set," Kirk grinned enthusiastically from the big chair where his lean length was sprawled. "Let's go!"

With only crackers and cheese for lunch and a can of soup for supper, Lisa and Kirk worked straight through till nearly nine. And—she was ridiculously glad—it was going well. In restrained, accurate historical style, Kirk was making Doña Luisita the wonderful woman she had been. Lisa was beginning to share his enthusiasm for her.

At last Kirk tossed the notes aside and rose, stretching. "Tomorrow's another day."

Lisa stood, too, moving her shoulders to get the weary stiffness out of them. Yes, she'd come back tomorrow. Just to make sure Kirk was really out of his slump.

"Early, then." She smiled and held out her slim hand. "Good night, Kirk."

He took her hand and pulled her to him, his arms closing tightly around her slenderness, his eyes glinting wickedly.

"The only way to get something done is to do it. You said it yourself, Lisa . . ."

And then his mouth crushed hers for a long, crazily sweet moment. Lisa's heart set up a swift thudding. *He shouldn't have,* she thought wildly, and then, more wildly, *but I'm glad he did . . .*

"I've wanted to do that all day," Kirk said. "You're very sweet, Lisa."

"Like honey?" she said crossly. "You promised no temperament."

"Antidote to honey," he chuckled. "And it was inspiration, not temperament. See you tomorrow."

She wouldn't go back, she told herself as she lay sleepless that night. Only a fool got caught twice in the same trap. Only—well, Kirk's kiss had done wonders for her battered ego. She felt delightfully, giddily happy and extremely unjilted. It was a lovely sensation . . .

Lisa went back the next day, and the next. Kirk glowed. At last, he said happily, he was writing something he could be proud of. Lisa was proud, too, when Kirk claimed that it was all due to her assistance and interest. She was, he stated, the best friend a guy ever had.

And if he interrupted his work now and then to kiss Lisa—well, who was she to deprive an artist of his inspiration! It was, she told herself whimsically, in the interests of literature that she kissed Kirk. Entirely in the interests of literature . . .

KIRK'S DICTATION WAS interrupted the third evening when, without warning, the front door burst open. A girl stood there. A raven-haired girl with a creamy oval face, dusky eyes, a mouth like a petulant poppy. She was swathed in platinum mink and a wave of heady perfume.

"Kirk!" Dramatically she flung her arms wide. "Kirk, darling! I'm here to help you with your book!"

"Why, Marvelle," Kirk said weakly. "What a—a nice surprise."

During his introductions, Marvelle gave Lisa one long, appraising look. Seeming to decide there was nothing to worry about there, she ignored Lisa and curled up in a big chair. Flinging her hands about dramatically, she chattered on at express speed in her rich voice.

"I've the most wonderful ideas, darling. There'll be a tremendous scene where Luisita dances on the table at the governor's banquet. You know, fiery, flashing, dangerous, daring—the sort of thing I do so well."

Kirk looked stricken. "Marvelle, Luisita wasn't that kind of person. She was—"

"But you promised," Marvelle pouted

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prettily, "to write your book with your Marvelle in mind, so the studio will buy it. You wouldn't be naughty to your Marvelle, like that other bad man was, would you, Kirk darling?"

Toasted marshmallow! Lisa thought scornfully. Honey!

She rose. "I really must go. It was nice meeting you, Miss Munro."

Kirk followed Lisa to the door. "You'll be back tomorrow?" he asked anxiously.

"Heavens, no." Lisa smiled tautly. "Not when you have Miss Munro to help you . . ."

"You're crying again," Gran complained as Lisa slowly entered the house.

"I'm not either." Lisa dabbed at her misty eyes. "That is, it's just because I'm so doggoned mad. Gran, Marvelle Munro's here. She's as sticky-sweet as her movies, and I know she'll make Kirk write his book all silly and swashbuckling, so she can play in the screen version." Lisa flung herself into a chair and gazed despairingly at Gran. "Oh, poor Kirk! All she cares about is his book, not him at all. Oh, I *hate* her!"

"That'll make it much pleasanter to give her a bad time." Gran looked pleased, then thoughtful. "No, that would be unkind. We'll be sweet to Marvelle—I wonder if I thought to tell you that your old history teacher, Henry J. Ames, is writing a biography of Cleopatra."

"No, you didn't," Lisa said absently. "I—did you say Cleopatra?" She fell silent. Marvelle Munro, the exotically beautiful Marvelle, costumed as Cleopatra . . .

"You know, I always enjoyed Henry J.'s classes," she drawled. "It would be nice to see the old boy. I wonder if he'd care to come to dinner."

"I shouldn't wonder." Gran's blue eyes were bright with mischief. "And so it won't be too dull for him, we could ask Kirk. And Miss Munro."

"Henry J. could give Kirk some pointers on Doña Luisita's life and times." Lisa laughed excitedly. "Gran, you're a wicked character and I adore you."

"DINNER? THAT would be just splendid, Lisa."

Over the telephone, Mr. Ames sounded genuinely pleased to accept Lisa's dinner invitation.

She waited until she saw Marvelle's long, low yellow car pull up before Kirk's cottage before she went next door.

"A little dinner party for Mr. Ames, my history teacher in high. He knows ever so much about Doña Luisita, Kirk. I do hope you and Miss Munro will come."

"Grand!" Kirk accepted at once. "Sounds like a wonderful opportunity for me. Nice of you to think of it, Lisa."

"A high school teacher? Sounds dreadfully dull," Marvelle yawned. "But if it will help you, Kirk . . . Yes, Lisa— I may call you Lisa?—we'll come."

"I can't tell you how glad I am, Marvelle," Lisa exclaimed truthfully. "Seven-thirty, then."

Dinner had been quite a success, Lisa mused contentedly as she served coffee in the living room. Kirk and Mr. Ames had barely noticed the excellent food they'd eaten, so deep were they in discussion of Doña Luisita. Half a dozen times Kirk had whipped out his pencil and a scrap of paper to scribble hasty notes.

"I didn't know that—wonderful, Ames! I don't know how I can thank you . . ."

It pleased Lisa, too, that Marvelle, gorgeous in a fussy flutter of topaz chiffon, was pouting. Several times she had tried to insert her own ideas into the conversation, but the men glanced at her with unseeing eyes and went on with their eager talk. It was obviously a new, and distasteful, experience for Marvelle.

At last Kirk leaned back in his chair. "You've got me on the right track at last, Ames," he smiled. "Fact—no embroidery, no big scenes, no nonsense. A book of authentic early California history.

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"History!" wailed Marvelle. "Oh, Kirk!"

Mr. Ames' faded blue eyes twinkled behind thick lenses and he ran a slender hand through his scant, drab hair. "Wish I could afford to write my *Cleopatra* that way. But I've a niece who needs expensive corrective surgery—the youngster was in an auto wreck—and I'm going to need a lot of money. So—well, there's one spicy chapter, for instance, with Cleopatra and Mark Antony floating on the Nile beneath an Egyptian moon. My, my!" Henry J. chuckled. "As I write, I find myself thinking in Technicolor."

"Cleopatra," Marvelle mused aloud. "Cleopatra in Technicolor . . . Mr. Ames." He glanced up and she smiled directly into his pale blue eyes. "Mr. Ames, why not let me drive you home in my car? I'd just adore to have you tell me more about your wonderful, wonderful book."

When Mr. Ames left with Marvelle he appeared dazed, Lisa thought in triumphant amusement. Dazed, but decidedly game.

When Lisa went to the door with Kirk, there was an odd, far-away look in his eyes.

" 'Night, Lisa," he said. "I'll be seeing you."

Lisa felt a little twinge of conscience. What if Kirk really loved Marvelle? What if—ah, but he couldn't! And if he did, he'd get over it. Wasn't she getting over Don? In fact—

Why, she *was* over Don! She never even thought of him any more. Not since Kirk Valentine occupied all her thoughts. She was—deliciously she savored the thought—she was in love with Kirk!

Lisa went to bed, to sleep all night on rosy clouds.

KIRK WAS GONE.

The house was unlocked, so Lisa entered, but Kirk was gone. Rolled in his typewriter was a note which said, simply:

Gone fishing. Back sometime.
K.

Lisa sank onto the desk chair. Fishing! Oh, how could he be so—so uncaring!

Then she saw Marvelle's note. It lay opened on the desk and Lisa quite frankly read it, and didn't even care.

Kirk—

If you loved me, you wouldn't waste my time on a stupid history. Mr. Ames understands me. I will be glorious as Cleopatra. Goodbye.

Marvelle

Lisa spared a second's pity for Henry J., that meek little man caught up in Marvelle's lovely coils, then decided it would probably be good for him. And certainly it would solve his financial problem if his book were bought for pictures.

But Kirk—*oh, my darling,* she thought in anguish, *how unhappy I must have made you with my meddling!*

No one knew better than she how bleakly awful it was to be jilted—and she had made it happen to Kirk. She would never forgive herself. How he must be hating her! If there were only some way to make amends, so that when he returned she could explain that she meant only the very best for him, always . . .

Absently Lisa started to straighten the disordered desk, putting Kirk's rough draft in order. Unscrambling chapters according to their order, she realized that this was the Marvelle version of the book. Kirk must have been working on it; it seemed quite complete. If she typed it for him, when he returned it would be ready to send off. He could—her heart was stabbed through with ragged pain—he could take it to Marvelle and she would forgive him . . .

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Her lips set, Lisa put a new ribbon in Kirk's typewriter, got paper, carbons, and set to work. When Kirk came back, she would have his book ready to submit to a publisher. And Marvelle . . .

It took Lisa nearly a week to complete the manuscript. When it was done, she laid the crisp white copy in a stack in the middle of Kirk's desk. Then she took the carbon copy home with her, to read again for typographical errors. She would be glad when she was entirely done with the thing, she thought bitterly. It was Marvelle all the way through.

That afternoon's mail brought a postcard from Kirk. He was at Lake o' the Pines Lodge, upstate. The message was brief:

Fine fishing. Wish you were here. Why not drive up?

Kirk

Lisa scribbled a reply:

Can't. Working. You *fish, Genius.*

Lisa

She flung down the pen in a sudden fury. Fishing, when he should be working! He was insufferably lazy.

She was furious with herself, too, for having been so foolishly gullible as to type his manuscript for him. Obviously she would never learn. Only—somehow this time it was different. When she had done Don's work for him, there had been the subconscious desire always with her to beat him at his own game. With Kirk . . .

Ah, she just loved Kirk! And he loved Marvelle. She was an utter fool!

THERE CAME THE morning when Lisa awakened to see Kirk's car at the curb before his cottage. She stifled the immediate impulse to fly next door at once to see him.

"Kirk's home," said Gran.

"He is?" Lisa patted back a yawn. "Packing his ski things, no doubt. Or tennis or golf, or whatever form of laziness he intends to indulge in next. *Men!*"

"I don't think you tried hard enough to get him," Gran remarked.

"What?" Lisa was outraged. "I worked my fingers to the bone, typing that silly romance of his, when I'd much rather it had been the historical novel which he's cast aside."

"You don't love him," Gran rejoined calmly.

"I do, too!" Lisa's face crumpled. "I love him so much I want him to do whatever he wants to do. Even if it's writing a trashy old bucket-of-blood novel, instead of a book to be proud of. I do, *too*, love him!"

"If I were you," Gran said, suddenly intent on her crocheting, "I'd go next door and ask Kirk about the fishing at Lake o' the Pines."

"You would?" Lisa pondered. Gran had been fairly good so far with this "If I were you" business . . .

Kirk was seated at his desk, the heap of manuscript before him.

"You shouldn't have," he said slowly. "Thanks, of course, though."

Lisa was completely deflated; everything she did was wrong.

"I'm not the kind to sit and loaf. But Marvelle will be glad, anyway."

Kirk rose, took the script to the fireplace, piled it on the blazing logs, where it started to smoulder.

"There goes Marvelle," he said with satisfaction. "Writing that damned thing wrote her clean out of my system." Returning to his desk, he drew a thick sheaf of papers from a briefcase, handed them with a little bow to Lisa. "First draft on 'Doña Luisita Gonzalez, a Biography'."

"The—the *real* Luisita?" Lisa gasped. "You said you were fishing!"

(Continued on page 123)

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Sitting on a rock watching, Letty caught herself wishing she could tell Eric about George.

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By TUGAR DePASS

Temporary Paradise

Letty found her corner in heaven when Eric kissed her, but she didn't know that the kiss could make him hate her.

LETTY SLID down from the back of the little burro, stretched her cramped muscles, and tried a wobbly step or two.

"Nix—nix!" old Pedro called cheerfully from where he was standing beside the lead burro in the pack train loaded with a week's supplies for the Paradise Silver Mine. With violent gestures, the Mexican indicated she was to sit down on a fallen log while he went to fetch someone from one of the little adobe huts scattered about the clearing.

Since "nix" was the only English word the old man knew, and apparently he used it to mean yes or no, as well as a number of other things, Letty obeyed without argument.

She watched him scurry away, his gaily

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striped serape flapping in the stiff mountain breeze, and reflected absently that she would be glad just to sit here for a few minutes, anyway. It would give her a chance to sort of catch her breath and collect her thoughts after that ten-mile burro-back ride up a twisting, tortuous mountain trail.

Brushing the tumbled honey-blonde hair back from her freshly sun-burned face, Letty glanced humorously down at her dust-caked blue jeans and the cotton jersey pullover which looked more gray than the yellow it really was. Golly, if George could see her now!

"If you'd only give a little more thought to your clothes and your grooming, darling, you could be a real beauty, you know," George was always telling her.

Well, she'd tried, she really had—especially since she and George had become engaged. She'd never thought being the sort of smart, glamorous beauty George meant was worth the time and money it took, but she understood why George felt that way. After all, George *was* George Van Doren, one of the tremendously wealthy, terribly aristocratic Van Doren clan, and he was marrying a girl who was just a secretary in the brokerage firm of Van Doren and Son. If said girl could become an outstanding beauty, the Van Dorens would be far more likely to overlook the fact that George was marrying out of his class.

But thinking about George and the marvelous, still incredible fact that he had asked her to marry him, wasn't collecting her thoughts the way she'd meant to. She ought to be deciding what attitude she would take toward Eric Sorenson, the man old Pedro had no doubt gone to notify of her unexpected arrival, the man she had flown all the way from New York to the wilds of southern Mexico to see.

Should she just come right out and demand an accounting, of his definitely suspicious behavior, or should she pretend she had come here simply on impulse, just because she had a two weeks' vacation and wanted to see the mine of which her brother had been half owner?

Yes, probably that last would be best. It would give her a chance to look around, talk to the workmen, perhaps find out on her own just what this man Sorenson was up to. Certainly he must be up to *something*. Otherwise why hadn't she heard a single word from him since that brief note three months ago telling her that Jimmie had died suddenly? She had waited and waited, thinking any day she would hear further details from him, probably an offer to buy her half interest in the mine. For, of course, as Jimmie's next of kin, half of the Paradise Mine belonged to her now.

But, of course, Letty reminded herself she mustn't judge Eric Sorenson until she had seen and talked to him. Perhaps he was just some poor, uneducated creature who didn't understand legal technicalities.

HER THOUGHTS broke off and she stood up quickly as the door of one of the huts opened and Pedro and a tall man with the broadest shoulders she'd ever seen stepped outside. Pedro was spouting a stream of Spanish and making vague apologetic gestures—no doubt explaining how, after inquiries in the little railroad junction in the valley, she had sought him out and insisted he bring her here. No doubt, too, Letty thought with a small grin, he wasn't bothering to mention the ten good American dollars she had paid for the trip.

The other man was obviously paying little attention to Pedro. Striding swiftly toward her in faded khaki trousers and a blue work shirt open at the throat, he was frowning with annoyance. Letty had an uneasy feeling that he would like nothing better than to pitch her back down the mountain trail.

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So this was Eric Sorenson! The name certainly suited him. His hair was as blond as her own, but so sunbleached it looked silvery with the bright afternoon sunlight on it. His eyes were ice blue, and yet, oddly, there was nothing cold or hard about them. Her vivid imagination saw him suddenly in Viking dress, standing at the prow of a ship. His head would be tossed back, just as it was now, his face alive with interest . . .

Yes, with a stifled sigh of relief, she saw that the annoyed, almost angry frown, had given way to an expression of intense interest, mingled with a sort of reluctant admiration as he drew closer to her. And she had the queer impression that a flame had leaped to life behind those ice-blue eyes; a flame which sent a heady rush of warmth through her own veins as those eyes flicked over her, taking her in from head to foot just as he came to a stop in front of her.

"Hello, Eric. I'm Letty Dale." With dismay, she realized the breathless feeling inside her had spilled over into her voice. She should have said Mr. Sorenson, not Eric, of course.

For what seemed an endless moment he just stood there looking down at her, apparently waiting for her to go on, but she didn't.

Then, as though prompting her, he said, "Jimmie's sister, of course?"

She nodded, her eyes searching his face. He looked faintly puzzled, nothing more; as far as she could see there was not a sign of guilty confusion in his expression.

And he sounded sincerely sympathetic when, with a man's natural gruffness, he told her, "I'm sorry about Jimmie—it must have been quite a shock to you."

"Yes, it was," she said quietly. "There were just the two of us, and we were very close. Of course I haven't seen him for the past three years, since he came down here to Mexico. But he wrote me often. His letters the past few months were full of the big thing you and he were doing with this old abandoned silver mine you'd bought together. I was so proud of him for making a success of his life at last.

"Of course," she added hastily, with an apologetic smile, "he was almost two years younger than I—just twenty-one, so probably I expected too much of him. I was so afraid he was turning into just a drifter, you know. Because he never seemed to stick to one job for long."

"I see." Eric Sorenson's voice was noncommittal, but she thought she saw a guarded, wary look in his eyes—as though he were thinking swiftly over what she had said, trying to decide just how much to say in reply.

And she had already decided this man was no ignorant, uneducated creature who just wouldn't know that she was entitled to a half interest in the mine.

SUDDENLY, she was aware that he was studying her face intently, apparently still trying to decide just what to say. For a moment she considered voicing her suspicion aloud, demanding an explanation here and now, but she decided against it.

This man was no fool. Suppose he flatly denied that Jimmie had been his partner? She might have a lot of trouble proving he was lying. Whatever legal papers there were concerning the partnership must have been in Jimmie's possession at the time of his death, and Eric Sorenson had had plenty of time to destroy them. As for Jimmie's rambling, boyish letters, for the life of her she couldn't remember whether he had ever come right out and said he was a partner, or had merely inferred it.

No, definitely, her first plan was better.

With a quick, friendly smile, she said, "I hope you don't mind my barging in on you like this? You see, I had a two-week vacation coming up and, on an im-

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pulse, I decided to spend it down here, so I could see Jimmie's mine." *Let him think she still thought of the mine as Jimmie's, not hers.*

"That's all right." He gave her a slow grin, but the uneasy, guarded look was still in his eyes. "We've a couple of guest huts for mine inspectors, and if you don't mind flouting conventions I'm sure I don't."

Letty felt herself coloring. She had thought of that angle, of course, but had felt the issue at stake was too important to let it stop her. Naturally, for George's peace of mind, she had let him assume she would be staying in the little town in the valley, ten miles from the mining camp, but she had known all along that wouldn't be practical for her purpose. She had to be right here on the spot where she could question the workmen, maybe even have a chance to go through Eric Sorenson's private papers to find something to prove her claim.

He had taken her arm now, and was leading her toward one of the little huts which looked like giant pink-white mushrooms nestled against the mountain side. Old Pedro was trotting along behind with her two bags, shouting something in Spanish to the group of Mexican women who were washing clothes in the swift stream which cut across one corner of the clearing.

Noticing the women for the first time, Letty gave a relieved little laugh. "It's really not too bad, is it?" she said. "The convention part, I mean—after all there are other women here. They're wives and daughters of the workmen, I suppose?"

He nodded, then, a sudden glint of mischief in his eyes, he said softly, "But I'm the only white man and you're the only white woman, Letty. If I could have foreseen a situation like this I'd have named the place Eden instead of Paradise. And I wouldn't have needed a snake to come along and tempt me, either."

"A snake might help, though," Letty laughed and wrinkled her nose at him. "I'm terrified of the things, and no doubt I'd throw myself right into the arms of any man around if one appeared on the scene."

They arrived at the little adobe hut then, and, after a glance around to make sure the place was in order, Eric left her.

"You'll want to unpack and freshen up—maybe rest for a bit," he suggested. "There's a makeshift shower of sorts in that little room at the back there, but I'd better warn you it's fed by mountain spring water and plenty cold."

Then, with a mock formal bow, he invited her to dine with him at seven in the "patio" between the two huts.

After he had gone, Letty started unpacking with a puzzled frown on her face. Why did the mere thought of dining with Eric Sorenson send her into such a state of ecstasy? What on earth had come over her, anyway? Here she was practically certain the man was a crook of some sort, and yet she was thrilled by his presence.

"After this you watch your step, young lady!" Letty told herself firmly. "Just because you've never met anyone like him, just because—yes, you might as well admit it—you like that Viking look of his, is no reason to trust the man."

JUST THE SAME, before that first evening was over, she knew it was going to be awfully hard to remember she didn't trust this blond young giant with the copper-tanned face and the ice blue eyes with the flame behind them. In spite of the fact that her mind told her she ought to be more suspicious than ever, Letty realized ruefully, while they sat with coffee and cigarettes, that she hated to have him say good night.

The table was covered with a red

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checked cloth, and the walls of the two huts protected them from the night breeze so that the flame of the squat white candle in the green bottle flickered only slightly. The meal, a delicious one of strange, exotic dishes Letty had never before tasted, had been served by a wrinkled faced old Mexican woman whom Eric called "Mama Conchita".

They must make quite a romantic picture sitting here, Letty reflected idly, watching Eric's strong, supple hands as he lifted the brown earthenware coffee pot to refill their cups. She in her yellow shantung dress, a short, fleecy white coat about her shoulders, Eric in an immaculate white linen suit. In the distance, the strum of a guitar and liquid Mexican voices blended in song.

Yes, definitely it was a romantic setting, and here in Eric's patio they were as secluded as if they were in a private dining room in New York. And yet he didn't try to make love to her.

Probably that was why she found it so hard to remember she didn't trust him, Letty decided. Because, as far as their personal relationship went, Eric was behaving just exactly as any honorable, decent man would behave toward a young girl who was, in a way, a guest in his home.

But she mustn't let that fool her, Letty reminded herself firmly for at least the tenth time since the meal commenced. The rest of Eric's behavior *was* suspicious. For instance, why did he change the subject every time she tried to talk about Jimmie? Oh, he did it very adroitly, so adroitly that for a while she hadn't been sure he was deliberately evading her questions.

But this last time she was sure. She had asked him to tell her how his and Jimmie's partnership had worked.

"Did you just share responsibilities as they came up, or did you and Jimmie each have separate duties connected with running the mine?" was her leading question.

And he had shrugged and said carelessly, "Oh, Jimmie did certain things and I did others." And then he had plunged into a long story about a man who had been his partner in a mining venture in South America.

But this time he wasn't going to get away with it, Letty determined. She let him finish the story, and then she said quietly, "You still haven't told me just how the partnership here worked, Eric."

"Oh, that . . ." He paused to light a cigarette, and above the match flame she saw his eyes studying her with a certain guarded look which every mention of Jimmie's name seemed to bring.

And then the match went out and his voice was so easy, so natural as he went on, that she wondered if suspicions had made her imagine that look.

"We just sort of worked together," he said. "Each of us did the things we were best suited to do. For instance—I'm a mining engineer, so naturally I took over the technical end of things. This mine was an old one, you know, had been abandoned for years. But I was sure with modern mining methods and machinery it could be made to pay, and it has. It's no bonanza but it's showing a good, steady profit."

IT WASN'T until she was in bed that night that Letty suddenly realized he *still* hadn't told her just what part Jimmie had played in the partnership. But why not, she wondered in bewilderment. On the face of it it didn't seem important one way or another. After all, she knew—and so did Eric that Jimmie had owned half the mine, so why did he evade an explanation of Jimmie's part in the venture?

She thought about it for a while, then decided she must be making a mountain out of a mole hill. Probably Eric wasn't even aware that he *hadn't* answered it.

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But how about that other question, the one she had asked just outside that door there when Eric brought her back to the hut?

"Eric—" she had said hesitatingly, and wondered why she hesitated. "Eric, your note about Jimmie . . . you told me so little. Only that he had died suddenly and been buried in a little church yard in the valley. I—it seemed rather strange. You must have known I'd want to know *how* he died?"

And Eric, after a rather tense pause, had said, "Look, Letty, it's late, and I'm sure you must be exhausted after your trip—especially that last ten miles on burro back. Also, you told me you and Jimmie were very close so it would be upsetting, to say the least, if we discussed his death now. Suppose we put that off for another time, shall we?"

Now, Letty wondered why she hadn't insisted on an explanation. What had been so mysterious about her brother's death? And why shouldn't she know the details. Again she recalled the gentleness in his eyes and the warm sympathy in his voice. That's why it hadn't occurred to her to doubt his motives for refusing to discuss Jimmie's death.

Staring wide-eyed into the darkness of the hut where the few pieces of crude furniture loomed as vague, suddenly terrifying shapes, she wasn't so sure. Her throat went suddenly dry and her heart began to thud against her ribs as a horrible question shaped itself in her mind. Suppose Eric had *murdered* Jimmie so that he could have the mine for himself? They were the only two white men in this isolated place, and he could easily have passed it off as an accident of some sort. The native workmen would never have questioned any story he chose to tell.

Letty found herself out of bed, flying to the door to turn the key in the lock. If Eric had murdered Jimmie for his share of the mine he might be planning to murder her too.

But, her hand on the key, Letty's panic suddenly subsided. She left the door unlocked and went slowly back to bed, a vivid picture of Eric's face before her eyes. Eric a murderer! She couldn't believe it. Why, she found it hard enough to believe he was the unscrupulous opportunist he must be! For if he weren't that, why had he kept silent all these months? Why hadn't he written her, asking what she wanted done about Jimmie's share of the mine?

Why, why . . . Letty fell asleep with the word repeating itself over and over in her tired brain.

WHEN SHE awakened the next morning she had the queerest feeling that all her questions had been answered while she slept. That she had only to accept Eric as he seemed to be—as a man who was attracted to her; who might even fall in love with her. If she forgot her suspicions and accepted that, everything would be all right.

And then, suddenly, she was sitting up in bed, her eyes bright with excitement. Why not? Why not *pretend* to forget her suspicions and encourage Eric to fall in love with her? Maybe that was the one sure way of finding out the truth. For a man in love is a man with his guard down. Sooner or later Eric would be bound to let something slip; something which would give her the proof she needed to back up her suspicions.

It was so easy to pretend she wanted Eric to fall in love with her that Letty couldn't help feeling a little guilty about it. After all she was going to marry George. Probably her feeling about Eric was because suddenly she was living in an entirely new world; a world which she couldn't associate in any way with George. Why, actually sometimes she couldn't even remember how George looked! He

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was terribly handsome, with dark hair and brown eyes and a little trim mustache, but, in spite of knowing all those things, somehow she couldn't get a complete picture of him.

Once, sitting on a big rock watching Eric cast for trout in the swift little mountain stream, Letty caught herself wishing she could tell Eric about that—maybe Eric could explain the absurdity of a girl not even remembering how her fiancé looked! But, of course, she couldn't tell Eric, for the simple reason that she'd never even mentioned George's name.

It was the fourth day that she almost told Eric about George. She had spent the morning at the mine, as she often did, with Eric coming now and then to sit beside her at the foot of a towering old tree. He was still trying to "educate" her, as he put it, but, actually, she understood little of his technical explanations of the working of the mine.

So she was enormously pleased when he told her that fourth day that he'd decided to take the afternoon off.

"There's a native mountain village about three miles away," he told her. "I thought you might like to see it."

So she changed into blue jeans and heavy walking shoes, and they started out right after lunch. The narrow trail wound steeply up the mountainside through woods so thick it might have been twilight instead of early afternoon. And all about them exotic tropical flowers bloomed and brilliantly plumaged birds flitted back and forth among the trees.

About halfway they came to a place where the low limb of a wide-spreading tree swung across the path, and Letty stopped and caught her breath in wonder. For growing on the limb was a cluster of tiny yellow orchids!

"Eric, look!" she exclaimed. "Did you ever see anything so lovely?"

And Eric, his bright blue eyes on her rapt face, said softly, "Yes—yes, I have. I've seen something as lovely as the girl I'm looking at right now."

She turned slowly, a sudden constriction in her throat. And she thought miserably, *I ought to tell him about George, before he says anything more. I have no right to trick him this way.*

But, before she could speak, she saw a tiny green snake out of the corner of her eye wriggle across the path just behind Eric—and the next thing she knew she was in Eric's arms, trembling as she clung to him, saying over and over again.

"A snake—Eric, a snake!"

And, even as she said it, deep inside her, she knew she wasn't really as frightened as she seemed. It was a very tiny snake. But she remembered what she had said about falling in a man's arms if a snake crossed her path.

But it was too late to draw back now, even though the harmless reptile had disappeared into the underbrush. Eric's arms had closed about her, and his lips were hard against her own in a kiss which seemed to rock the earth upon which she stood.

She hadn't meant to respond to that kiss; she had had every intention of telling him the moment it was over that she'd had no right to let him kiss her at all. Only when Eric finally lifted his head to smile unsteadily down at her, she couldn't speak at all. And she knew, in spite of her intentions that she had responded to his lips on hers.

"Praise be for snakes in Paradise," Eric chuckled. "Not that I'd have waited much longer for one to come along." And then, his face sobering, he added huskily, "I love you, Letty—but you know that, don't you, darling?"

"PARADISE—" she said wildly, seeking frantically for some way to avoid the question she knew would follow. "Maybe it's just a temporary paradise, Eric. We've known each other such a

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very short time. It's just too sudden."

"Yes, that's true—only four days." He smiled tenderly down at her. "Only—well, time has nothing to do with it as far as I'm concerned, sweetheart. But I can see how you might not feel the same. You wouldn't want to mislead me, even unintentionally—you'd want to be darn sure you felt the same way I do before you said so. So take all the time you want, darling. We'll keep it a temporary paradise until you tell me you want to make it a permanent one."

Afterward, Letty could never remember much about the remainder of that afternoon. The picturesque native village, the hand-wrought silver ring in the shape of a tiny snake which Eric bought her, the confident love and happiness in Eric's eyes when he looked at her, all these things were mere surface impressions, with no depth nor meaning. Only one thing was real. Eric's voice saying.

"You wouldn't mislead me, even unintentionally."

Over and over Letty told herself it was foolish to feel so heartsick, so utterly miserable because she had done exactly that. After all, Eric hadn't been honest with her, either, had he? His evasiveness; that guarded, wary look in his eyes whenever Jimmie's name was mentioned certainly proved he was concealing something from her.

And so, in the end, she still did not tell Eric about George. And before the end of that day she was to regret her silence more than she had ever before regretted anything in her life.

For when she and Eric arrived back at the mine, George was there!

SHE SAW HIM the moment they emerged from the mountain trail into the clearing. He was pacing back and forth beside old Pedro and two burros, and, crazily, her first thought was, how funny George must have looked on a burro. The idea of dignified, sophisticated George astride one of the little beasts was so ridiculous she almost burst out laughing.

And then, as George caught sight of them, she knew with sick dismay that this was no time for laughter, for he was obviously furious. He was facing them now, evidently so mad he couldn't speak for the moment. Eric—Letty saw with a swift sidelong glance—was looking merely surprised and puzzled.

"What are you doing here, George?" she finally managed weakly, since, obviously, *somebody* ought to say something.

George let out his breath with an explosive sound and glared at her. "I came down to get to the bottom of this business, of course! I never should have let you come alone in the first place, but you would dash off right when I was in the midst of closing a big deal. And of all the wild goose chases! I should have guessed all along that no-good brother of yours couldn't become the partner in a mining venture practically over night. If you'd bothered to make a few inquiries in that town back there, you could have found out the truth just as I did. Jimmie was a common, ordinary hired foreman here, nothing more. Those letters to you were just a batch of bragging lies. What's more, there was no mystery at all about his death—as you were so convinced there was. He was killed in a drunken brawl in a—"

"Shut up, damn you!" Eric's voice broke into the furious flow of words. "Can't you see what you're doing to her? Who the devil are you anyway?"

Letty's face was drained of all color as she looked from one to the other. *Jimmie . . . poor wild, headstrong young Jimmie. Oh, it was all so clear now. She had kept after him to settle down; to try to make a success of his life. Too young, too unstable to do that, he had finally taken the easy way out by writing her those bragging, boastful letters . . .*

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With an effort she brought herself back to her surroundings.

George, drawing himself up, glaring at Eric, was saying, "Who am I? I'm George Van Doren, Letty's fiancé."

Eric didn't answer that; it was doubtful if he even heard it. He had turned to look at Letty, his eyes incredulous, unbelieving.

"It's true," Letty whispered painfully, her heart like a lump of ice in her breast.

"What!" It was George who stared incredulously at Letty now. "Do you mean to say you've spent days here alone with this man and not told him you were engaged to me? Well, really, Letty! I was shocked enough when I learned you were staying here instead of in town, but I assumed of course as George Van Doren's fiancée you'd be safe enough. Only now I'm wondering if you wanted to be safe. Maybe you even encouraged this man to make love to you! Certainly there's something between you two, *that's* easy to be seen."

ERIC GAVE a short, harsh laugh. "Relax, brother—relax. There's nothing between Letty and me. I'll grant you there was a time when I thought there was—but not now, not anymore. Me, I don't go for cheap, two-timing little cheats! You can have her, and welcome." And he turned and strode away up the path down which he and Letty had come a short time ago.

Letty watched him disappear around a curve of the path and could feel only a dull, aching emptiness inside her.

As though from a long way off she heard George saying indignantly, "Well, really, Letty, aren't you going to say anything? Don't you think you owe me an explanation? After all the man practically admitted you'd let him make love to you!"

Letty turned slowly and looked at him, a long, long look as though she were seeing him for the first time. Which, in a way, she was. She could think of a lot of words to fit George; words she'd never thought of before. Words like smug and conceited and selfish—and, yes, thoughtless, too. Look at the way he had just blurted out the truth about poor Jimmie, never stopping to think what a shock his words would be to her.

While Eric—Eric had tried every way possible to spare her that truth. Oh, yes, she knew now that was the only reason Eric had evaded her questions about Jimmie.

George cleared his throat uneasily. "All you've got to do is tell me you've done nothing wrong. I'll believe you, you know that, my dear."

"But—I'd have to tell you, wouldn't I?" Letty said slowly. "You couldn't believe in me just because you love me, just because you know the sort of person I am."

She shook her head sadly. "That sort of love—love without trust—I'm afraid isn't worth much, George. Besides, I'm not sure we ever were *really* in love with each other. With me, well, I guess it was mostly just a feeling of flattery that George Van Doren, who could have had his pick of any number of wealthy society girls had chosen *me*. And you, George, maybe you loved me—maybe you were just physically attracted to me, I don't know. Whatever it was, I do know deep down inside you you were always a little ashamed of your feeling for me. The fact that you've tried to make me over ever since we became engaged proves that, I think."

"Does it, indeed!" George's little black mustache seemed to almost quiver with his anger. "I don't think you've proved anything except what I should have suspected from the first, Letty. Like the romantic, sentimental little fool you are, you've fallen in love with this man Sorenson—a man you know nothing whatever about. That's really what's back of all this, isn't it, Letty?"

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"Yes, I suppose you might call that the prime or basic fact," Letty said quietly, with a twisted little smile. "I love Eric. And so—" she flung out her hands in a helpless little gesture, "if you don't mind, George, I wish you'd go on back to New York."

She watched him stalk in silent fury to where old Pedro waited with the two burros. She saw him disappear down the twisted mountain trail, and then she turned and began running swiftly along the woodland path Eric had taken.

Maybe Eric hated her now, maybe he would never forgive her, but she wasn't just going away without at least trying to make him understand.

HE HAD stopped before the low-flung branch of the old tree, his gaze evidently fixed on the cluster of yellow orchids growing there. Evidently, too, so absorbed in his thoughts he did not hear her approach until she was right beside him.

"Eric—" she said breathlessly, while the bitter scorn in his eyes stabbed at her heart. "Eric, I couldn't just go away. I *couldn't*. You were right about some things but you were wrong about others. I—I'm not just a cheap, two-timing little cheat. You've got to believe this, Eric. I had a good reason for not telling you about George, for—encouraging you to fall in love with me. I wanted to—"

"Skip it, Letty." His lips twisted into a bitter little smile. "I figured out that angle for myself. You wanted to find out the truth about Jimmie. You thought, in love with you, I might let something slip. In short, you believed I was some sort of a crook, didn't you? And that's the part that hurts, Letty. That's the part I can never forgive you for."

Letty swallowed hard. "Not even when —when I tell you that foolish little game I was playing backfired on me, Eric; that while I was trying to make you fall in love with me, *I* fell in love with you?"

"Did you?" He sounded completely uninterested, almost bored. "I'm afraid we have very different ideas about love, Letty. Love without trust isn't love."

"That's funny," she said dully. "That's exactly what I just told George." *It was no good—nothing she could say would do any good.*

And then, suddenly, she remembered that first night in the dark hut when she had wondered if Eric might have murdered Jimmie, and how she had laughed at the idea afterward. And all the other times when, no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't convince herself Eric was dishonest. And, finally, only this afternoon, the way she had responded to Eric's kiss . . .

"Eric—Eric, listen!"

And, the words tumbling from her lips in a breathless rush, she told him all the things she'd just been thinking. "Oh, don't you *see, Eric?*" she finished desperately. "Right here on this very spot this afternoon, I proved I trusted you. I—I might have let *you* kiss *me* just as a part of gaining your confidence, but I wouldn't have kissed you back the way I did if I hadn't loved you and trusted you completely."

For a long, agonizing moment she thought it had all gone for nothing.

And then, abruptly, a flame leaped to life behind the ice blue of his eyes.

"Maybe you've got something there," he drawled. "But just to make sure, I think I'll check on it right now." And he pulled her gently into his arms and kissed her.

Paradise, Letty thought blissfully. And she didn't mean orchids growing wild or gaily plumaged birds flitting about. She meant that from now on, wherever they were, she and Eric would be together, living in their own private paradise.

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(Continued from page 67)

analyst will, but it's up to you to free your own mind of prejudices, to see a trait for what it actually is.

When people are told they are stubborn, they nod carelessly, thinking it a form of strength. Stubbornness is like a bulldog, it pulls back, prevents progress, hampers a person through sheer bullheadedness. Stubborn people are those who say "won't" instead of "no."

Questions and Answers

M.S.D. Microscopic handwriting indicates unusually well-developed powers of concentration.

J.B. Those who put off crossing a "t" put off doing more important things in life. Procrastination, the thief of time, is the sign.

M.X.C. The boyfriend who has a very heavy pressure handwriting is going to be rather earthy, practical, and matter-of-fact. Don't expect him to enjoy going to the opera, to an art museum, to anything aesthetic.

Your other friend, who has the large, rounded script is of a friendlier type. He's good-natured, likable. He lacks the aggressiveness of the earthy chap, but has a pleasanter disposition. The first will make, and save, money. The second can make his through good will, but would need help saving it.

F.S.D. Girls who doodle hearts and flowers are usually ready for love. Doodling is the recording of subconscious thoughts, wish thoughts. Girls who are thinking in terms of falling in love often give themselves away in this manner and, frequently, initial the hearts with *his* monogram.

Mary M. The man who always prints his letters is likely to be of the engineering, draftsman, type. I'd have to see the actual letters in order to be more specific. These men are trained for efficiency, accuracy, and extreme care. They usually carry these traits over into their private lives.

ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER DARLING

(Continued from page 111)

Don shook his dark head and grinned. "I merely said the fishing was fine. I didn't say I was doing any of it." He reached out and drew her into his arms. "Oh, Lisa, I worked like a dog. Locked myself in my cabin and worked, *worked.*"

"And it's finished, Kirk?" She couldn't believe it.

"All but the dedication: *To my wife, Lisa.*"

Lisa's gray eyes went wide and starry. "*To my* . . . Oh, Kirk, darling!"

"I hoped you'd let me dedicate it that way. Lisa, I love you so terribly much."

She lifted her eager mouth to his and, with the beautiful bliss of his kiss, felt her heart spin and soar until it threatened to fly away. Like Gran's plane, she thought dizzily; bless Gran . . .

At last she freed herself from Kirk's embrace.

"I want to start typing that script right away," she said earnestly, but Kirk's big hand took her wrist and held it.

"No," he said firmly. "Let it go. You and I are going to leave our work and start on a honeymoon."

Lisa took one more look at the material. She should be typing it, she thought conscientiously. But—

"Okay, lazy," she chuckled and went back into his arms. "Honeymoon comes first."

She chuckled, too, remembering the carbon of Kirk's other book which she had put away. Someday it may come in handy, she thought dreamily. A sort of nest-egg for the future. In case Kirk's in a slump and the twins need their tonsils out or something.

Bless Marvelle, too, Lisa thought whimsically, and put her out of her mind forever.

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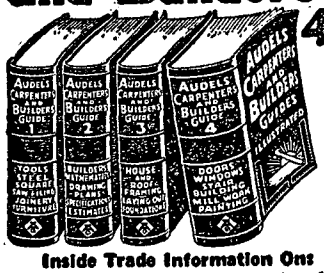

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(Continued from page 10)

If you feel you'd like variety, you may create your perfume aura in another way. You may use complementary fragrances, such as lilac or lily-of-the-valley perfume with violet or orangeblossom powder, bath oil and toilet water.

Go adventuring with your perfuming—don't stop with a mere daub of perfume behind each ear!

THE USE of perfume can begin with sachets of your very own scent in your bureau drawers and on your clothes hangers. The fastidious often make sachets of their dress material, and sew them into their gowns.

Bath salts should be regarded as an essential to any woman's scent campaign. Here are some traditional as well as new uses for bath salts:

A scant handful of bath salts tossed in the tub before the hot water is turned on, to dissolve as the tub fills, will perfume the bath and scent the room. In addition, bath salts are a water-softening agent.

A teaspoonful of bath salts dissolved in the water in which you rinse your lingerie is a quick and effective way to be prettily scented from the skin out.

A pinch of bath salts in the water when you wash your hands will do a lot for smoothing and softening as well as perfuming them.

When you go traveling, fill an envelope or two with bath salts and place them between the layers of clothes in your suitcase, where they will double as a sachet, and be a great addition to hotel tubs.

In the home, bath salts can be quickly and effectively used to scent the living room before a party or to sweeten up musty halls or closets. Simply put a few crystals in a pretty open bowl, and add very hot water. (The hotter the water the quicker the salts dissolve.)

(Continued on page 126)

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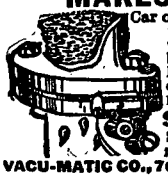

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(Continued from page 124)

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When you're dry, dust on delicately perfumed bath powder. Dusting powder is chemically composed to absorb moisture. Therefore, it should be liberally puffed on right after your towelling. A final whisk of the towel will remove the excess powder and leave a luscious smoothness to your skin. Bath cologne or toilet water is still another scent aid.

Rub perfume on your skin, so that the warmth of your body will enhance its fragrance. That's also the way to make it really yours, because on each skin it has a slightly different effect.

Dab or spray it on behind your ears and on your wrists. Saturate a clean piece of absorbent cotton with it, and pin it inside your brassiere, in the lining of your hat. Apply some to the inside hem of your skirt or to the back of your knees. Then, as you walk, you'll emanate an elusive scent. Never apply so much that you reek with it.

You can also add a little cologne or toilet water to your final rinse water when shampooing your hair. Or spray or dab scented hair lacquer or brilliantine on your coiffure. When you are dressing, put a drop of perfume underneath your girdle. When you are finished dressing put a drop in the cavity of your neck, on your temples, in the hollow between your bosom, inside your elbows and at the nape of your neck. Take along a small vial to "re-scent" with, just as automatically as you carry your lipstick.

Some women like to moisten a piece of

(Continued on page 128)

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SAVE 2c—Stick coupon on penny postcard.

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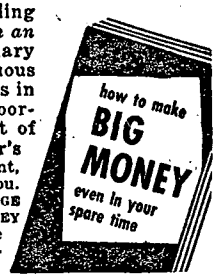

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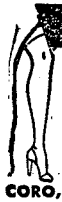

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SAHARA WATERLESS HAND SOAP

Removes without water — Paint, Tar, Grease, Ink, etc. Quickly — Easily — Contains Lanolin. PREVENTS CHAPPING AND ROUGH, RED HANDS. SEND $1.00 FOR TWO 60c TUBES — POSTPAID. Money-Back Guarantee — Agents Wanted.

Sahara Products Corp., Grand Rapids, Mich.

(Continued from page 126)

cotton with perfume, place it on the hairbrush and brush the fragrance of the perfume into the hair. And here's a *don't* to remember: Do not apply perfume to furs, as it will dull the lustre of the skins. Scent the lining instead.

Always make the most of your perfume, not only in the way you apply it, but in the way you keep it. Perfume evaporates in heat and light. Don't leave your perfume bottles on your bureau in the sunlight. Keep them in their boxes or in a cool, shaded place. If you have a little perfume left in a large bottle, pour it into a smaller bottle where the air space will not evaporate it rapidly away. Keep your bottles away from the edge of your shelf or bureau where they may be knocked over. If you have unsealed perfume that you are not using, be sure to put paraffin over the neck of the bottle to close the scent away from the decomposing effects of the air.

Fragrance is the third dimension of your personality. Wear the one of your choice with a flourish for that air of sophistication and glamor that no man can resist. And *then* give yourself an S. A. rating!

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Amazing guarantee assures big profits. Show Nylons that are replaced FREE, up to 1 year, if hose runs, snags, tears.
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Kit contains complete line of beautiful women's hosiery, men's sox unconditionally guaranteed *for 1 full year* or replaced FREE, plus sensational selection of guaranteed rayon and nylon lingerie.
Earn FREE wardrobe as BONUS. No experience necessary. Spare or full time. Nothing to pay now or later. Rush your name and address today for FREE *money making Sales Kit* to:
ROSALEE HOSIERY CO., Clifton 3, New Jersey

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RECORD ROMANCE

(Continued from page 64)

★ KITTY KALLEN (Mercury)

You Missed the Boat

Thought this was going to be good, but Kitty, *You Missed The Boat* all right! She sounds like she's trying to imitate Monica Lewis singing *The One Who Gets You.* If she sounded like Monica it would be all right, but she doesn't quite make it!

★ JIMMY DORSEY (Columbia)

I'll Hold You
Rag Mop
That's a Plenty

The first sounds like JD was trying to imitate the days when he had Helen O'Connell and Bob Eberly. The second and third (which are backed) are better. Claire Hogan sounds like Claire Hogan here on the *Mop* and Jimmy provides some of the peppiest and finest music heard yet this year. *Plenty* is instrumental.

★ DINAH SHORE (Columbia)

It's So Nice To Have a Man Around the House

Dinah is so great here there is hardly anything left to say. Only thing I can think of to say is: "Get it!"

★ TONY PASTOR (Columbia)

Wedding Samba

Another version of the tune plugged into the big time by Art Ford, the well-known New York (WNEW) disc jockey. It's worth a listen.

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SHOP METHOD
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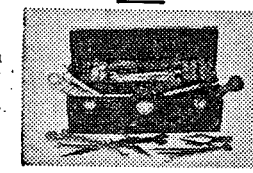

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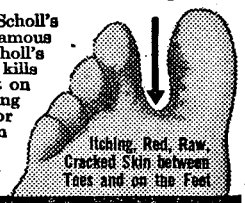
Dr. Scholl's Fast Relief and Healing Aid!

Don't wait! Get Dr. Scholl's SOLVEX *today!* This famous prescription of Dr. Scholl's quickly relieves itching, kills fungi of Athlete's Foot on contact, aids rapid healing of red, raw, cracked or peeling skin. Insist on Dr. Scholl's SOLVEX. In Liquid, Ointment or Powder form.



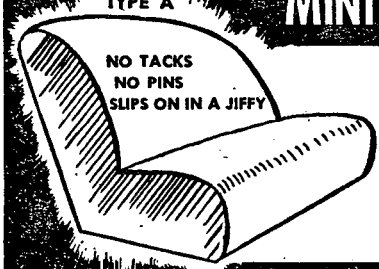
Itching, Red, Raw, Cracked Skin between Toes and on the Feet

Dr. Scholl's SOLVEX

AMAZING NEW SPECIAL OFFER . . . MAIL ORDER TODAY

TYPE A

MINIT-ON PLASTIC AUTO COVERALLS



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Always ready . . . just slip on over car upholstery. Sure protection against wet or greasy garments, bathing suits, dog's muddy paws or children's soiled shoes. Wonderful as beach "blanket" for sun bathing or picnics. Fine for home. A thousand uses. ORDER TODAY. Send money order. SATISFACTION GUARANTEED. State type desired.

SPECIAL PRICE NOW — Separate front or rear seat **$1.98** — Complete set, front and rear seats **$3.75**

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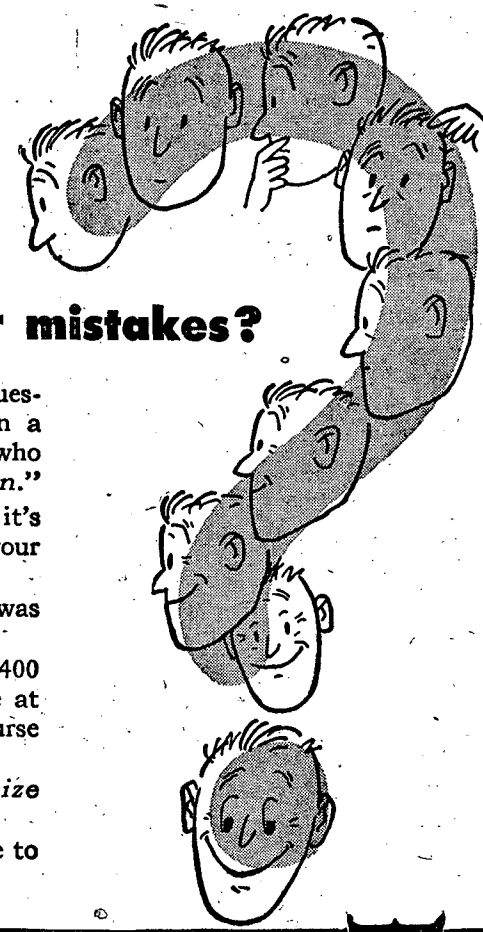

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You needn't make that mistake. Not when it's so easy to study with I. C. S. at home in your spare time.

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Number Three Mistake? "*Failed to seize opportunities.*"

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KENDEX NYLONS REPLACED FREE . . .

if they run or snag within guarantee period up to three months! Impossible? It's true! No matter what the cause—hard use or deliberate abuse—whether it is fault of the hose or the wearer—Kendex nylons are replaced FREE if they run, snag or become unfit for wear within the guarantee period. How could any woman resist a positive guarantee of satisfaction when she can obtain it without paying any more than other standard advertised brands? Kendex nylons are NOT sold in stores, so you have no competition. Complete line includes everything from heavy 70 denier service weight to gossamer luxurious ultra sheer 15 denier 60 gauge. Proportioned sizes and lengths. Latest colors plus white.

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In addition to the sensational Kendex nylons, you will have a complete line of glamorous lingerie, beautiful robes and housecoats plus a complete line of Kentcraft mens' hosiery guaranteed for one full year. Any pair or pairs of men's hose that does not give satisfactory wear within one year of purchase will be replaced FREE!

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Kendex will spend over $350,000.00 in 1950 to tell millions of readers of the advantages in buying from you. Almost every issue of Good Housekeeping, Saturday Evening Post, McCall's, Women's Home Companion and Ladies' Home Journal carry our advertising in addition to many others. Kendex has advertised in Life, Look, Collier's, etc. Awarded Good Housekeeping Seal. Thousands of orders are shipped daily from coast to coast.

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GREATER COMFORT

MORE SAFETY LONGER MILEAGE

Joe McCarthy

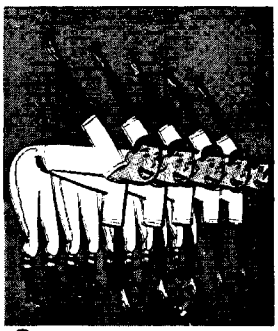
Famous baseball manager, says:

"LOOK INSIDE FOR INSIDE PROOF"

Nobody knows the value of teamwork better than Joe McCarthy. "It helped me win seven world championships, plus two major league and two triple-A minor league championships," says Joe. "And right inside a B. F. Goodrich tire I saw inside proof of the teamwork that makes BFG the best tire value." You can see it too—see how B. F. Goodrich tire cords are precision spaced, sealed in live rubber, with *no cross-threads*. They're free to work together, in rythm, to give you "Rythm Ride"!

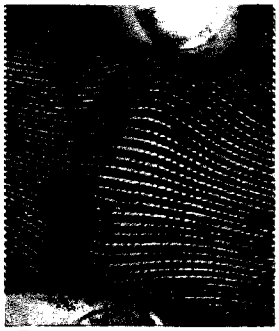
IF YOU CAN TELL WHICH ATHLETES ARE BEST, YOU CAN TELL WHICH TIRE IS BEST:

2 Every tire has thousands of cords that flex as you ride. In most tires, these cords are *out of rythm* like the athletes above. That's because the cords are hampered by *non-working* cross threads.



3 Because no cross-threads hinder the action of B. F. Goodrich tire cords, they work *in rythm* like the athletes above. Carry impact from one to another, smother road shock, reduce wear, cushion bumps.

4 Note how cords of most tires are bunched and gapped by slender cross-threads. Result: weak spots, "slacker" cords, overworked cords. BFG cords, instead, are sealed in rubber, with uniform spacing and tension.



5 Only B. F. Goodrich has the equipment and skills to give you "rythmic-flexing cords" in every tire for every need. Buy today. See your B. F. Goodrich dealer. The B. F. Goodrich Company, Akron, O.

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